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SOME UNIQUE GOLD AND BRASS COINS OF THE IMPERIAL GUPTAS

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SOME UNIQUE GOLD AND BRASS COINS OF THE IMPERIAL GUPTAS *

In November, 1951, while examining the coin-collections of Mr. Bishun Narain Kapur of Chowk, Lucknow, the present writer came across three coins of the Imperial Guptas, the like of which had not been noticed by any numismatist so far. Two of them are of gold and belong to Samudragupta, but the third one is of brass and appears to have been issued by Chandragupta II. Again, of the two gold coins, one is of the so-called *Standard Type* and the other, of the *Lyrist Type*; while the third one which is made of brass, comes under the category of the *Archer Type*. Despite their high antiquity, all the three coins are in fairly good condition, and, as such, present no difficulty in studying their details. At the request of the present writer, the aforesaid brass coin of Chandragupta II was acquired for the State Museum of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, to enrich its collection of Gupta coins. Recently, the other two coins have also been acquired for the museums of Uttar Pradesh: the coin of the *Standard Type*, for the Archaeological Museum, Mathura, and that of the *Lyrist Type*, for the State Museum, Lucknow. The details of all the three coins have been given below.

*Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Numismatic Society of India, held in December, 1951 (*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, xiii. p. 224).

References to the coins (illustrated on Plate), cited in abbreviation in the body of the text, are the following:—

- (a) *J. N. S. I.* (*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*);
- (b) *J. R. A. S.* (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London*);
- (c) *J. A. S. B.* (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta*);
- (d) *B. M. C.* (*British Museum Catalogue*);
- (e) *B. H. C.* (*Catalogue of the Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard, Altekar*);
- (f) *I. M. C.*, i. (*Indian Museum Catalogue, Vol. I, Smith*);
- (g) *Z. f. N.* (*Zeitschrift für Numismatik, Berlin*);
- (h) *G. M.* (*Guptakālina Mudrāyēṇ, Altekar*);
- (i) *N. S.* (*Numismatic Supplement of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*); and
- (j) *N. C.* (*Numismatic Chronicle, London*).

SAMUDRAGUPTA

(1) *Parākrama Type (Standard Type)*(Large Fabric)¹*Provenance*: Unknown*Weight*: 118.77 grs. (7.6958 gms.)*Metal*: Gold, 18.75 ct.*Condition*: Fairly good, except for the edge which is slightly worn.*Fabric*: Round, thin, and of large size; diameter .9.

There is, however, a small but deep cut (about 1/10") across the belt of the figure of the king.

Obverse: King (with jugate heads), nimbate, standing to left, dressed in long riding coat having curved opening of the lower half in front and long tail at the back, tight-fitting trousers with round buttons or pearls thickly set at the sides, and belt (slightly above its usual position), wearing crown or turban, ear-rings, necklace, and wristlets, and holding in his left hand, a standard surmounted by a bar and fastened with a banner which floats behind him (*jaya-dhvaja*), offers with his right hand oblations at a low fire-altar from which is rising flame in three jets.² Behind the fire-altar and partly screened by the right hand of the king, is a standard or pillar surmounted by the figure of the bird Garuḍa facing front

1. Gold coins of the Imperial Guptas, the size of which ranges from .7 to .79, have conventionally been placed in the category of 'Small Fabric', while those which measure .8 and above, have been classed under 'Large Fabric'.
2. The long staff-like object which the 'king' is represented as holding by its upper part in his left hand, on the *obv.* side of our coin, is a *dhvaja*, and that, too, a *jayadhvaja*, 'banner of victory', the unmistakable sign of *vijaya*, 'victory', and an appropriate emblem of a *jitaripu*, 'the conqueror of enemies.' It is, thus, perfectly in keeping with the *obv.* legend of the *Standard Type*: 'Samaraśatavitatavijayo jitaripurajito divaṁ jayati.'

The object depicted as floating behind the 'king', should be taken to be the representation of either a 'banner' or a 'flag', but not of a 'fillet', the conception of which is not Indian. The method of representing that object, is typically Kushāṇa, as evidenced by some gold coins of Kanishka I.

The chain mail on the left shoulder of the 'king' suggests that he is wearing his battle-dress.

(*Garuḍa-dhvaja*).¹ Under the left arm of the king is written vertically (in Gupta characters): *Samudra*. Marginal legend commencing from 1 and running round clockwise, is indistinct throughout, the letters being partly or wholly off the flan.²

Reverse: Goddess Ambikā, two-armed, (*dvibhujā*), nimbate and seated on a high-backed throne, is facing front and resting her feet on a full-bloomed lotus. She is dressed in loose robe of the Indian style (*śāṭaka*) and scarf with folds over her shoulders, and wears a

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1. The *Garuḍa-dhvaja* as depicted on certain gold coins of Samudragupta and his successors, consists of a pillar, occasionally with an abacus, surmounted by the figure of the mythical bird *Garuḍa*, popularly believed to be the king of birds and killer of snakes. Since *Garuḍa* was also believed, as is now, to be the vehicle of Lord Vishṇu, the *dhvaja* in question is more suitable for a Vishṇu temple than a *yajñśālā* which the *obv.* device of the coins of the *Standard Type* seems to suggest. As for evidence, we may refer to the Besnagar Pillar Inscription of Heliodorus (c. 120 B.C.) which mentions for the first time a *Garuḍa-dhvaja* that was set up in a Vishṇu temple. From that point of view, the depiction of that kind of pillar on a coin, without the representation of a temple, is highly inappropriate. But the reasons for its depiction on some Gupta coins, seem to be (i) that the religion of the Gupta family was Bhāgavatism, and, as such, *Garuḍa*, the vehicle of Lord Vishṇu, was an object of adoration to the members of that royal house, and (ii) that the figure of that mythical bird, as described in the epics, was adopted by Samudragupta for the first time to be the insignia of the Gupta royal family.

The depiction of a *Garuḍa* standard or *Garuḍa* pillar, as a part of the *obv.* device which is a scene of worshipping Agni as a mark of the celebration of victory in many battles (*samarāśatavitatavijaya*), is purely an art-motif that was introduced with a purpose. The representation of that mythical bird as perching on a pillar, is nothing but a suggestion by means of a suitable symbol, viz, the supremacy of Samudragupta over all human beings, like that of *Garuḍa* over all birds and snakes. Since the figure of *Garuḍa* was the insignia of that Gupta monarch and after him, of his successors, we are inclined to believe that the conception which had led the designer of the aforesaid coin-type to introduce that mythical king of birds and killer of snakes in the scene of Samudragupta's triumphant entry into the *yajñśālā*, is verily the same as what had inspired another artist, a poet, to sing in praise of the heroic deeds of Skandagupta thus:

नरपतिभुजगानां मानदम्पोत्फणानाम् ।

प्रतिकृतिगडडाज्ञां निर्विषीं चावकतां ॥

(*Cor. Ins. Ind.*, iii. Fleet, p. 59).

2. The coin-legend in full is, '*Samarāśatavitatavijayo jitaripurajito divaṃ jayati*.'

keśabandhamukūṭa, or jewelled band, slightly above the forehead, necklace and armlets.¹ She holds a noose (*pāśa*) in her outstretched right hand, and a short sword with broad blade (*khadga*) in the left. Her left arm is folded at the elbow. Back of the throne, on which the goddess reclines, has an ornamental border, portions of which are to be seen round her head and also on the right. The two front legs of the throne, one on the right and another on the left side of the lotus, have been clearly represented. There are a symbol and the legend *Parākramaḥ* (written in Gupta characters) on the right, and another symbol on the left.² Border of dots.

[Plate I]

We have mentioned above that the present coin comes under the category of the so-called *Standard Type* of Samudragupta. Unfortunately, the correct designation of that coin-type itself is as yet a matter of controversy, and so also is the identity of the object held by the 'king' in his left hand, from which the *type* has apparently derived its name. It has received such widely different names as, *Javelin Type*, *Spearman Type*, *Standard Type*, and *Sceptre Type*, according as the object in the left hand of the 'king', had appeared to be a 'javelin', a 'spear', a 'standard', and a 'sceptre' respectively to different numismatists. It is therefore necessary at this stage, to express our own opinion on the subject and also to state the reasons for our acceptance of the name *Parākrama Type* as mentioned above.

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1. Amongst the different types of *mukūṭa*, head-gear or crown, prescribed for the decoration of the images of the female deities in the iconographical works of the Brāhmaṇas, as also in others which contain some useful iconic information, *keśabandhamukūṭa* is one. The *mukūṭas* prescribed in them, are, *kaṇḍa*, *kirīṭa*, *kuntala*, and *keśabandha*. The particular type of *mukūṭa* with which the female deity depicted on our coin, has been decorated, seems to be *keśabandha*. *Keśabandha-mukūṭa*, as the name suggests, is more a head-gear than a crown, since the main purpose of wearing it, is to keep the long unknotted hair symmetrically arranged on either side of the head and also to keep it spread at the back. In a miniature portrait, as we find on the Gupta coins, the *mukūṭa* of the *keśabandha* type appears to be a coif or some tight-fitting head-dress.
 2. The symbol in the *right* field is indistinct. For the one in the *left* field, see *British Museum Catalogue*, Gupta Coins, Allan, p. 3; symbol on coin No. 9 and also on that in Sir Richard Burn's collection (Pl. I. 12 and 13).



1. Obv.

2. Rev.

3. Obv. (Enlarged)

A Unique Gold Coin of Samudragupta of the
Parākrama Type (Standard Type)

There is a sharp difference of opinion amongst numismatists regarding the identity of the object which the 'king' is represented as carrying in his left hand. Wilson took it to be either a 'spear', a 'banner', or a 'trophy' (held by the 'king' in his right hand!).¹ Smith at first considered it to be a 'javelin' and therefore designated the coin-type as *Javelin Type*.² He, however, soon changed his opinion, as he clearly recognized that object afterwards to be a 'spear' by its topmost part which, according to him, was merely the representation of a spear-head. In view of this fact, he re-named the same coin-type as *Spearman Type*.³ What had appeared to be a 'spear' to Wilson and Smith, was nothing but a 'standard' to Allan. He therefore applied the name *Standard Type* to all those gold coins of Samudragupta, on the *obv.* side of which the 'king' figures with that uncertain object, irrespective of the differences to be noticed in its appearance on some of them.⁴ All numismatists, including Altekar⁵ and Gupta,⁶ accepted the name as given by Allan, but none of them adduced any special reason in favour of its acceptance. Recently, however, Gupta has questioned the appropriateness of that name which he now considers to be misleading,⁷ and his contention has been fully supported by Chhabra,⁸ and even partly by Altekar.⁹ Thus, there is no unanimity amongst numismatists regarding the correct designation of that coin-type of Samudragupta, which represents the 'king' as holding a long staff-like object in his left hand. It may be noted here that two gold

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1. *Asiatic Researches*, xvii (1832), p. 566 (Pl. I. 5). For a solution of the mystery of 'king facing right', see *J.N.S.I.*, xii. p. 117.
 2. *J.A.S.B.*, liii (1881), 1, p. 172; *J.R.A.S.*, 1889, p. 68; *ibid.*, 1893, p. 100.
 3. *Indian Museum Catalogue*, i. pp. 102-103 (1906). In *Ind. Mus. Catal.*, i. (Supplementary), Mr. B. B. Bidyabinod has accepted the name *Standard Type* as given by Allan in preference to *Spearman Type*, the one suggested by Smith. See p. 30 (1923).
 4. *British Museum Catalogue*, Gupta Coins, p. 1.
 5. *J.N.S.I.*, viii. pp. 46-47.
 6. *ibid.*, viii. pp. 44-45.
 7. *ibid.*, ix. p. 146, n. 1.
 8. *ibid.*, xi. pp. 25-26.
 9. *Guptakālina Mudrāyeh*, pp. 29-37.

coins, one of Chandragupta I and another of Chandragupta II, have come to light so far, on the *obv.* side of which, the 'king' has been depicted in the very same manner.¹

We need not discuss here either the earlier or the later opinion of Smith, since he has not adduced any reason for either of them. They are, in fact, based entirely on his personal observation of the object held by the 'king' in his left hand, like that of Wilson. Allan, on the other hand, finds no characteristic feature of a 'spear' in that object, at any rate, not on its upper part, and therefore considers it to be a 'standard'. In his opinion, it is merely the reproduction of a similar object, either a 'standard' or a 'sceptre', which is to be seen in the left hand of the 'king', as depicted on some Later Kushāṇa coins. He is further of the opinion that the 'trident' which the Kushāṇa Emperor Vāsudeva I is represented as carrying in his left hand, on the *obv.* side of his coins, may be considered to be the prototype of that object. Conventionally, as Allan thinks, it stands for a 'standard', and, as such, he considers the name *Standard Type* to be highly appropriate.² The opinion of that learned numismatist had found a favourable acceptance on all hands ; but, as stated above, recently some scholars have questioned not only the identity of the object to be seen in the left hand of the 'king', but also the appropriateness of the name of the coin-type, as suggested by him. Gupta, who had previously accepted the name *Standard Type*, has now rejected it on the ground that 'Indian tradition never favoured the king being his own standard-bearer.' He prefers to take that curious object to be a *rājadaṇḍa*, sceptre, since the 'kings are frequently represented as

1. *J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 145 (Smith); *J.N.S.I.*, ix. p. 146 (Gupta). Contrary to the opinion maintained by Gupta, we think that there is no cogent reason to suppose either that the two gold coins are of the same *style* and *type* or that they were issued by the very same king. The coin described by Smith (acquired by Rodgers at Haripur, E. Punjab), which we consider to have been issued by Chandragupta I, is definitely archaic in character and is therefore older than the one described by Gupta (now in the coin-cabinet of the Bhārata Kalābhavana, Varanasi). The absence of *rev.* legend on the former, is an additional evidence pointing to the same. It is interesting to note that the first appearance of the legend on the *rev.* side of a gold coin of the Imperial Guptas, is on that of the *King and Queen Type* of Chandragupta I; and it will be seen that it was not intended to give wide publicity to an epithet or title of the issuer, but to serve some definite political purpose. See also p. 34.
2. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Gupta Coins, Intro. p. lxix.

carrying sceptres in their hand.¹ Chhabra fully endorses the opinion of Gupta and cites evidence from literature in support of the same.² There are, however, certain difficulties in taking that staff-like object to be only a 'sceptre,' as pointed out below. In his *Catalogue of the Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard*, Altekar accepted Allan's designation of that coin-type, i.e., *Standard Type*, despite the differences to be noticed in the depiction of that object on certain coins of that type.³ But in another work published recently and entitled *गुप्तकालीन मुद्राएँ*, he distinguishes between the *Standard Type* (ध्वजधारी प्रकार) and the *Sceptre Type* (दण्डधारी प्रकार) by taking the very same object to represent a 'standard' on certain coins, and a 'sceptre' on others.⁴ Recently that object has been identified with *Indradhvaja* by Joshi.⁵

From what has been stated above, it will be seen that there is no consensus of opinion amongst numismatists regarding the correct designation of that coin-type of Samudragupta, on the *obv.* side of which the 'king' has been depicted as carrying a long staff-like object in his left hand. As stated above, the same *obv.* device is also to be found on two unique gold coins, one of Chandragupta I and another of Chandragupta II, from which it is evident that the *type* in question was popular in the Gupta royal family, at least for three generations. Chhabra's contention that the coin of the *Standard Type*, which Gupta has attributed to Chandragupta II, was, in reality, issued by Chandragupta I, is entirely a different issue which affords no material help in solving the numismatic problem confronting us here.⁶ In view of this radical difference of opinion, it will not be proper to accept any name for the coin-type under discussion, *unless and until the object held by the 'king' in his left hand, is correctly identified.* And the only means of identifying the same, is obviously to re-examine minutely the details of that object with the help of some well-preserved gold coins belonging to the series of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta.

1. *J.N.S.I.*, ix. p. 146, n. 1.

2. *ibid.*, xi. pp. 25-26.

3. See p. 7.

4. See pp. 29-37.

5. *J.N.S.I.*, xix. pp. 14-19.

6. *ibid.*, xi. p. 15 and ff.

The line of investigation suggested above, enables us to make the following observations¹:—

(a) Considerable difference is to be noticed between the coins in respect of the depiction of that long staff-like object in the left hand of the 'king'. It is either uniform in shape or tapering towards the top, or even tapering towards the bottom. It is the last one that gives it the appearance of a spear held invertedly, as stated by Allan.²

(b) Generally, that staff-like object has been depicted as having a mounting at the top. The mounting is either bar-shaped (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 7, 11, 12 and 13; Pl. II. 4; *B.H.C.*, Pl. I. 11 and 14; Pl. II. 2, 5, 10 and 14; Pl. III. 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15; *I.M.C.*, i. Pl. XV. 7) or has two sections of which the upper one is a flat bar and is as much short in size as it should be, while the lower one has the appearance of a ball. The latter type of mounting, though artistic, is scarcely to be seen on the coins of the *Standard Type* (*I.M.C.*, i. Pl. XV. 6).

1. For the purpose of specifying the special features presented by the gold coins of the so-called *Standard Type* issued by Samudragupta, on the basis of which we have classified them, we have taken into consideration only those which are now in the following museum collections or found in the hoards mentioned below (coins as illustrated in *Catalogues* and *Journals*):

- (1) British Museum (London) collection,
- (2) Indian Museum (Calcutta) collection (examined personally by the writer),
- (3) U. P. State Museum (Lucknow) collection (examined personally by the writer),
- (4) Prince of Wales Museum (Bombay) collection (*Bayana Hoard Catalogue*, p. 329),
- (5) Bamnala Hoard (7; the attribution of one coin is very doubtful),
- (6) Bayana Hoard (143),
- (7) Bharsar Hoard (2),
- (8) Hajipur Hoard (2),
- (9) Hoogli Hoard (1),
- (10) Kasarwa (Ballia) Hoard (12),
- (11) Kusumbhi Hoard (3), and
- (12) Tikri Debra (Mirzapur) Hoard (2).

Figure, within brackets, indicates the number of the gold coins of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta, discovered in the hoard.

Of the Bhārata Kalābhavana (Varanasi) collection of the gold coins of Samudragupta, belonging to the *Standard Type*, we have taken only one into consideration for our purpose. It has been referred to by us, where necessary. Other coins of that coin-type in that collection, are unimportant.

2. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Gupta Coins, Allan, Intro. pp. lxviii-lxix.

The bar-shaped mounting is ordinarily straight, but shows a tendency to be slanting, when it occurs close to the edge of the coin (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 6; *B.H.C.*, Pl. III. 7).

(c) If either of the aforesaid types of mounting is not to be seen at its proper place, as is sometimes the case, the topmost part of that staff-like object appears clearly to be pointed, like that of a javelin (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 16 and 17; *B.H.C.*, Pl. II. 1, 7 and 9; Pl. III. 11; *G.M.*, Pl. I. 14) or a spear-head (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 8; *J.A.S.B.*, 1884, Pl. II. 3. Unique).

(d) The staff-like object has been depicted very frequently as having a 'banner' or 'flag' tied to it, which floats behind, irrespective of the shape or form of its topmost part. If it occurs, it has been shown as tied to the staff much below the top.

(e) On certain coins of the *Standard Type* series, the staff-like object has been shown without any 'banner' or 'flag' tied to it (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 11, a unique specimen; Pl. II. 1-5; *B.H.C.*, Pl. III. 13-15; *J.N.S.I.*, v. Pl. IX. A, 2 and 7 of the Bamnala hoard; *G.M.*, Pl. I. 15; Pl. II. 9). On those coins where it has not been depicted, the mounting of the staff-like object, is invariably bar-shaped.

We have mentioned above all the noteworthy features of the long staff-like object to be seen in the left hand of the 'king', as depicted on the *obv.* side of the gold coins of the so-called *Standard Type* issued by Samudragupta. The details of that object, as given above, enable us to classify his coins under the following heads:—

(i) Those which depict the staff-like object as having its top mounted and a 'banner' or 'flag' tied to it.

(ii) Those which depict that object as having its top mounted but having no 'banner' or 'flag.'

(iii) Those which depict that object as having a pointed top and a 'banner' or 'flag' tied to it.

A further division of the coins coming under Section (iii) is possible on the basis of the exact shape of the topmost part of that object.

i.e., whether it bears the semblance of a spear-head (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 8) or looks like the pointed top of a javelin (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 17; *B.H. C.*, Pl. II. 9; Pl. III. 11). The presumption, however, remains that the pointed top of a 'javelin', which is to be seen on certain coins, is nothing but a crude representation of the familiar spear-head, since the early Gupta die-cutters were not so highly skilled or proficient in their art as their successors.

From the classification of coins suggested above, it will be seen that the name *Standard Type*, as given by Allan to all those gold coins on the *obv.* side of which the 'king' has been portrayed as holding a staff-like object in his left hand, is clearly a misnomer. It can be applied to the coins belonging to one of the three categories specified above, but not to all of them. Those coins which come under the second category, because of the fact that the staff-like object has been depicted without its component, the 'banner' or 'flag', have justly no claim to be assigned to the *Standard Type* series, for the simple reason that no royal 'standard' as such has been depicted on them. Similarly, those coins which come under the third category, because of the fact that the staff-like object, instead of having a 'bar' at the top, has a 'pointed head' like that of a javelin or spear, cannot also be reasonably included in the *Standard Type* series, since that object has been depicted on them, either as a 'spear' or as a 'javelin', but not as a 'standard'. It, thus, stands to reason that there should be separate denominations for referring to those coins which had hitherto been classed under the *Standard Type*. We therefore suggest three different names to refer to the coins belonging to the three categories specified above, one for each. They are the following:—

- (1) *Standard-bearer Type*—King standing, facing left and holding in his left hand a standard by its upper part, with a flag or banner fastened to it, which floats behind him.

Var. A.—The standard has a bar-shaped mounting.

Var. B.—The mounting of the standard has two sections of which the upper one appears to be a short bar and the lower one, a ball.

- (2) *Sceptre-holder Type*—King standing etc., holding in his left hand a long sceptre with mounting, by its upper part.

- (3) *Spearman Type*—King standing etc., holding in his left hand a spear by its upper part, with a flag tied to it, which flies behind him.

I. *Standard-bearer Type*

While suggesting three different names for the coin-type under discussion, based on three distinct representations of the object carried by the 'king' in his left hand, we are not oblivious of certain objections that might be raised by numismatists against their acceptance. Thus, the objection that might be raised against No. (1)—and in this particular case, it has already been done—is that a king is not expected to be depicted on his coins, as his own standard-bearer or, in the words of Gupta, 'Indian tradition never favoured the king being his own standard-bearer.'¹ The objection is valid, if we only take that object to be an ordinary royal standard which the 'king' is represented to be carrying. But we think that the *obv.* device and the *obv.* marginal legend suggest something about the identity of that object, which is very much different from what has been stated by Gupta. In our opinion, although in designing the *obverse* of this series of coins, the Gupta artist had copied much from the *obv.* device of the gold coins of a Later Kushāṇa king named Basana (Pasana, Pasata), he has tried to create the impression, however unsuccessfully, that Emperor Samudragupta, after defeating his political adversaries in a number of battles, has entered the *yajñśālā* (place of religious sacrifice), holding the *jayadhvaja* (banner of victory) firmly in his left hand, and is now worshipping the Fire-god Agni at his altar.² As it appears, in order to give full effect to the motif as conceived by him or, in other words, to represent it in the best possible manner, the Gupta artist has made certain necessary changes in the *obv.* device of the aforesaid Kushāṇa coins, before utilizing it for his own purpose. Thus, he has not only

1. *J.N.S.I.*, ix. p. 146, n. 1.

2. Rodgers, C. J., *Catalogue of the Coins in the Government Museum, Lahore*, p. 53 (1891). *J.R.A.S.*, 1893, pp. 145-146. But it might be also that Samudragupta derived the *Standard Type* from the gold coins of Chandragupta I who again had copied it from those of King Basana.

replaced the 'trident' (*triśūla*) figuring in the left field, as depicted on the *obv.* side of those Kushāṇa coins, by the 'Garuḍa standard', but has also substituted the marginal Greek legend occurring on the same side, by one in Sanskrit, written in Gupta script.¹ Again, whereas on the gold coins of a Later Kushāṇa king, the marginal legend on the *obv.* side, occurs to mention the name of the ruler who minted them, his title, and the designation of the family to which he belonged, the same on the Gupta coins under discussion, serves the purpose of explaining the *obv.* device, but that, too, by excluding the name of the issuer. This is, indeed, a novelty; for in the case of the coins of different ruling families, whether Indian or foreign, issued before the time of Samudragupta, the marginal legend on the *obverse*, invariably mentions the name of the issuing authority. The motif of the Gupta artist has been adequately explained by the *obv.* marginal legend, each and every word of which is highly significant. It has been read as, '*Samaraśatavitatavijayo jītaripurajito divaṃ jayati*' ('The Invincible One, Winner of victory extended over a hundred battles, and Vanquisher of his enemies is now conquering the heaven').² We are not at all certain, whether the changes on the *obv.* side noticed above, were made by some die-cutter or designer of coin-types; but it is more than evident that he has amply succeeded in giving expression to the *obv.* device by the short marginal inscription composed for the purpose. By signs and words he tells us that the issuer of the coin is Samudragupta who belongs to that royal family of which the insignia is the figure of Garuḍa, the killer of snakes and vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu,³ and who after fighting 'a hundred battles' against his enemies and coming out victorious in all of them, has entered the *jayñāśālā*, grasping firmly his *jaya-dhvaja*, and is now offering oblations to Agni at his altar, for being able to gain paramountcy on this earth, by bringing his military

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1. The 'trident' in the left field, which the 'king' faces, appears for the first time on the *obv.* side of the gold and copper coins of the Kushāṇa Emperor Vāsudeva I (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Greek and Scythic Kings, pp. 160-161; Pl. XXIX. 12-14). It, however, does not figure always on the gold coins of that ruler (*Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. pp. 208-211).
 2. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Gupta Coins, p. 1. For a slightly different legend, see *J. N. S. I.*, viii, p. 44; *J. R. A. S.*, 1893, p. 101.
 3. It is needless to mention here that it was through Samudragupta that the figure of Garuḍa became the insignia of the Gupta royal family.

campaigns to a glorious end through his grace, and also to solicit his help for becoming the ruler of heaven by displacing Indra from his lordship over the celestial kingdom. The expression *divaṁ jayati* occurring at the end of the marginal inscription cited above, may be taken to imply that the task of conquering the realm of the gods has already been commenced by Samudragupta here on this earth, and that, too, as the *obv.* device suggests, by offering oblations to Agni, the Fire-god. Apart from this commonsense interpretation, whether right or wrong, those two words may also be taken in the light of what Harisheṇa has said about his master's *kīrtti*, or reputation, in his famous *praśasti*, engraved on the Allahabad-Kosam Pillar of Aśoka. It would be better, if we cite here the actual words used by that royal panegyrist, for understanding correctly the context of the marginal legend under discussion. Referring to the heroism and other noble qualities of Samudragupta, the poet Harisheṇa who was intimately connected with the emperor, because of his holding a number of high offices in the government, whether successively or simultaneously, writes :

“*Tasya vividhasamaraśatāvataṛaṇadakshasya parākkramāṅkasya sarvaprīthivīvijayajanitodayavyāptanikhilāvanitalāṁ kīrttimitastridaśaṭati-bhavanagamanāvāptalalitasukhavicharaṇāmāchakshāṇa iva bhuvo bāhurayam-uchchhritaḥ stambhaḥ.*”¹

It will be seen from the extracts cited above that, although there is a striking similarity between the eulogistic epigraph composed by Harisheṇa and the *obv.* and *rev.* legends of the gold coins of Samudragupta of the so-called *Standard Type*, as composed by some official of the royal mint, as regards the choice of expressions, so far as they relate to the king, such as, *samaraśatāvataṛaṇadaksha* and *samaraśatāvitatavijaya* (*obv.*), and *parākkramāṅka* and *parākrama* (*rev.*), the latter is not as much explicit as the former, since he has not mentioned what was actually conceived by him to be conquering the heaven (*divaṁ jayati*), when the king was still alive. What was conceived by the former to rise high up, ‘enter into the palace of Lord of the Gods (Indra), pervade it, and move about there gracefully and comfortably’ or, in other words, to occupy it,

1. *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, iii, Fleet, pp. 6 and 8 (*Ins. lines 17 and 29-30*).

is, obviously, the *kīrtti* of Samudragupta's exploits and achievements, which he has so beautifully described in the *praśasti* composed by him. But the difference that is to be noticed between the relevant portions of the epigraph, as cited above, and the marginal legend on the *obv.* side of the coins of the *Standard Type*, is not in the use or suppression of the word *kīrtti*, but in the means of *āchakshāṇa*, indication, of its reaching the heaven. The best means of giving expression to it, as conceived by that royal panegyrist, was the erection of a pillar which, 'like the arm of the Earth raised upwards,' will eternally point to that fact. But the motif which had captivated the imagination of that officer of the royal mint, was to represent the king as holding a *dhvaja* and offering sacrifice at the altar of the Fire-god Agni, from which the flame is rising in three jets, leaping into the celestial sphere, and suffusing it with the *kīrtti* of the king's heroism in warfare, and prowess having no equal in the three worlds. The *obv.* marginal legend on the gold coins of the *Standard Type*, which we have cited above, gives a clear indication of that motif. The expression '*divam jayati*' occurring in that legend, cannot be taken to suggest either that the king is dead and is now conquering the heaven or that he is conquering it by going there himself. While both the interpretations are clearly absurd, the former is likely to create the impression that Samudragupta's coins of the *Standard Type* were posthumously issued. If that expression suggests anything, it is the fame (*kīrtti*) of the king's heroism and prowess (*parākrama*) that is rising high up and filling the realm of the celestial beings, through the grace of the god Agni, the Divine Messenger, while the king is worshipping him and offering oblations at his altar, in grateful recognition of his blessings which had helped him in coming out victorious in 'a hundred battles' (*samaraśata*). Since this is the only sensible interpretation of the *obv.* device of those coins of Samudragupta, the *dhvaja* with which he has been portrayed, cannot but be the *jayadhvaja*, grasping which firmly, as it were, he is offering oblations to Agni at his altar. Thus, if the king has to appear before some god, in whatever form he may have been represented, for the purpose of worshipping him ceremonially, to celebrate the winning of victories spread in 'a hundred battles', would it be proper for him to make one of his household-staff hold the *jayadhvaja* and in his company, present himself for that purpose?

Would it not be in the fitness of things to hold that symbol of victory himself, while offering oblations to the deity? Though influenced by the *obv.* device of the gold coins of the Later Kushāṇa king mentioned above, the Gupta die-cutter or artist in question thought it to be more dignified to represent the 'king' as holding that object himself, while worshipping the god Agni, instead of introducing a standard-bearer in the scene to hold it, in view of the sacredness of the occasion. The objection that has been raised by Gupta, regarding the 'king' being posed as his own standard-bearer, was obviously not contemplated by that Gupta artist who, on the other hand, deemed it only proper to represent the 'king' as holding the *jayadhvaja* himself, in view of the occasion for and the nature of the ceremony.

The contention of Gupta is not valid, since the *obv.* marginal legend of the gold coins of Samudragupta, belonging to the *Standard Type* series, as cited above, enables us to understand that in the scene depicted on the *obv.* side of the coins of that *type*, the 'king' holds the *dhvaja*, not under ordinary, but under extraordinary circumstances. It also tends to show that it is not an ordinary *dhvaja* that the 'king' is holding himself at the time of worshipping the god Agni, but the *jayadhvaja*, the symbol of victory. We are inclined to believe, in view of these facts, that the coins of the so-called *Standard Type* were issued by Samudragupta after his conquest of Āryāvarta, while those of the *Aśvamedha Type*, after his *digvijaya* in Dakṣiṇāpatha (Deccan). We are further of the opinion, but for an entirely different reason, that his coins of the *Archer*, the *Kācha*, and the *Battle-axe Type* were issued earlier than those of the *Aśvamedha Type*. As we know, of the different series of coins issued by Samudragupta, each having a separate *obv.* device, those which belong to the *Standard Type*, the *Archer Type*, the *Kācha Type*, the *Battle-axe Type*, and the *Aśvamedha Type* bear memory of his extensive conquests, through the legends inscribed on them. Our main reason for considering the *obv.* device of either of the first four coin-types to be chronologically earlier than that of the *Aśvamedha Type*, is the letter *si* which does not occur on the *obv.* side of any one of them. As a part of the *obv.* device, it occurs only on the coins of the *Aśvamedha* and the *Lyrism Type* (both the *fabrics*).¹

1. For the occurrence of the letter *si* on a coin of the Small Fabric group of the *Lyrism Type* of Samudragupta, which is unusual, see p. 47.

From our foregoing observations it will be seen that the name *Standard Type*, or better *Standard-bearer Type*, is not a misnomer, when applied to those coins of Samudragupta, on the *obv.* side of which the 'king' has been represented as holding an object resembling a long staff, to which is tied a flag or banner which floats behind him. Although its prototype is to be found on the gold coins of the Later Kushāṇa king Basana as mentioned above, that object cannot but be the *jayadhvaja* which Emperor Samudragupta is represented to be holding himself before the god Agni, as a sign of his victory extended over 'a hundred battles.' In our humble opinion, the *obv.* device and the marginal legend which characterize the series of gold coins under discussion, justify the name *Standard Type* as given by Allan, or *Standard-bearer Type* as suggested by us.

II. *Sceptre-holder Type*

Let us now consider the validity of the name *Sceptre-holder Type*. As pointed out by us, there are some coins of Samudragupta of the so-called *Standard Type* on the *obv.* side of which the long staff-like object in the left hand of the 'king', has been depicted without a banner. For this reason, the suspicion that naturally arises is that it is not a 'standard' but a 'sceptre'. It is also strengthened to a certain extent by the fact that the sceptre was a symbol of royalty in those days, as is now. Moreover, as pointed out by Chhabra, in certain important Sanskrit works, the king has actually been described as *daṇḍadhara*, or sceptre-holder, the *daṇḍa* being a symbol of sovereignty.¹ Thus, there can be no objection either in considering the object in the left hand of the 'king', to be a sceptre or in designating the coin-type in question as *Sceptre-holder Type*.

There are, however, certain difficulties in accepting the name *Sceptre-holder Type*, which we would like to bring to the notice of numismatists for their consideration. One of them is that the sceptre cannot be longer than or even as long as the average height of man; but on the coins of the *Standard Type*, the staff-like object held by the 'king' in his left hand, has that abnormality. With one end resting on the ground, on all the coins, without any exception, it has been shown as rising as high as the head of the 'king' and even higher. One may

1. *J.N.S.I.*, xi. pp. 25-26.

therefore feel some difficulty in taking it to be a 'sceptre'. The first Indian king to be portrayed on his coins with a sceptre, is Wema Kadphises (Kadphises II), as is evident from a particular *variety* of gold coins of the stater class issued by him.¹ From the same, it further appears that the sceptre was much smaller in size and, hence, more convenient to carry than the long staff-like object with which Samudragupta has been portrayed. Again, the same kind of sceptre also figure; on the coins of Huvishka, which he is represented to be carrying in his right hand.² It is interesting to note in this connexion, that the kind of sceptre with which the Kushāṇa emperors used to adorn themselves, as suggested by the coins of the two named above, was richly carved with different designs on its upper part, if not over the whole of it. Whatever the case may be, these facts are likely to give rise to the suspicion, whether the staff-like object held by Samudragupta in his left hand, is a 'sceptre.' But the problem may be investigated from another point of view and that is, whether such a long sceptre has been depicted on the coins of any Indian ruler, belonging to the pre-Gupta period, or not. The earliest representation of that particular type of sceptre, so far as the numismatic evidence goes, is on the silver tetradrachms and drachms of the Attic, as also on the didrachms and hemidrachms of the Persic Standard of the Indo-Bactrian king Heliocles, on the *rev.* side of which, Zeus has been represented as holding it in his left hand. Numismatic evidence further tends to show that this *rev.* coin-type was subsequently copied by such famous Indo-Scythian rulers as, Maues, Azes I, and Azilises, and also by the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares.³ It was extensively copied even by

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1. *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. Whitehead, p. 183 (No. 32). See also p. 184 (Nos. 36-46) for the representation of 'sceptre' on copper coins (Pl. XVII. 36). Gardner has wrongly taken the 'sceptre' as depicted on the gold and copper coins of Wema Kadphises, to be a 'club', because, perhaps, of the elaborate carvings on the upper part of that object. Cf. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India, Gardner, pp. 124-128. See also Pl. XXV. 7 and 9.
 2. *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. Whitehead, p. 194 ff.; *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India, Gardner, pp. 136-153. Here, too, that learned numismatist has mistaken the 'sceptre' for an 'ear of corn'. For the correct identification of that object as depicted on certain gold and copper coins of Huvishka, see p. 137 (No. 18) and pp. 157-158 (Nos. 182 and 191).
 3. For the coins of Heliocles mentioned above, see *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. pp. 27-29 and *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Greek and Scythic Kings, pp. 21-23. The didrachm of the

Vonones, the Parthian king of Arachosia (Kandahar) in his silver didrachms and hemidrachms of the Persic Standard, which he issued conjointly with his brother Spalahores, and separately also with his brother's son Spalagadames.¹ Thus, the long-sized Greek and the medium-sized Kushāṇa sceptre may be expected to have been known to the indigenous ruling families of the pre-Gupta period, through the extensive circulation of the coins on which they occur ; and there can be no wonder, if the influence of one of them or the other can be traced on the coins of Chandragupta I and Samudragupta.² In view

Persic Standard in question is represented by a singular specimen which is now in the British Museum cabinet (No. 22 of Heliocles).

As for the coins of Maues, see *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, pp. 68 and 70, and *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. pp. 98-100. For the coins of Azes I, see *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. pp. 104-112, and *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, pp. 73-77; and for those of Azilises, see *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. pp. 133-134, and *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 93. Zeus 'holding long sceptre', also figures on certain conjoint silver issues of Azes I and Azilises (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 92). See also *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. pp. 146-150, and *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, pp. 103 and 106, for the representation of Zeus 'holding long sceptre' on some billon coins of Gondophares.

1. *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. Whitehead, pp. 141-142 ; *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Greek and Scythic Kings, pp. 98-99.

Zeus 'holding long sceptre in his left hand and thunderbolt in the right', is also the *rev.* type of the silver coins of Spalirises (brother of Vonones) as well as of those which he had issued conjointly with Azes II (*Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. pp. 143-144; *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, pp. 100-102). In this connexion, it may be noted here that not only Zeus but also Mioro (Sun-god Mihira) and another unknown male deity have been represented as carrying a long sceptre. The two mentioned last have been depicted on the coins of Huvishka and Azilises respectively (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 157; *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. p. 135). On some bronze coins of Maues, in addition to Zeus (*obv.*), some city-goddess or Tyche (*rev.*) has been represented as carrying a long sceptre (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 70; *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. p. 99).

2. For a gold coin of Chandragupta I of the *Standard Type*, see *J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 145. We are, however, not certain, whether on the *obv.* side of that coin, the 'king' carries a spear or a standard. For a number of reasons, we totally differ from Gupta in respect of his opinion that it was issued by Chandragupta II (*J.N.S.I.*, ix. p. 147). See p. 6, n. 1 and p. 34.

On the *obverse* of his gold coins of the *King and Queen Type*, Chandragupta I has been represented as holding either a crescent-topped standard (with banner) or a long staff-like object (without banner). The latter is obviously meant for a sceptre, the symbol of his sovereignty. This long variety of sceptre figures generally on those coins, on which there is a 'crescent' (*Chandra*) at the top, between the 'king' and the 'queen'.

of this fact, the possibility of that long staff-like object being a long-sized sceptre, cannot be easily ruled out.

The other difficulty of taking that long staff-like object to be a sceptre, is that the name of Samudragupta being written in two parts (*Samudra—gupta*) vertically, one part occurring on either side of that object, it might be contended that it was not possible for the artist to depict the banner for want of space. It may be noted here that the banner is to be found missing from the *obv.* device of all those coins of the *Standard Type* series, on which the king's name is written vertically in two parts, beneath his left arm. The absence of banner can, thus, be easily accounted for. But it would be wrong to entertain such an idea, since on certain coins, the banner has not been depicted, even though the king's name is not inscribed in two parts. Only the first part of his name, i. e., *Samudra*, is to be seen on them, beneath his left arm, as is usually the case.¹ This particular *class* of coins should be kept separate from others of the same series, because of that distinctive feature.² We have therefore no other alternative but to take that long staff, without a flag or banner, which is to be seen in the left hand of the 'king', on those coins, to be a sceptre, remembering at the same time that the king has actually been styled *daṇḍadhara*, 'sceptre-holder', in certain important Sanskrit works. There is, thus, sufficient justification for applying the name *Sceptre-holder Type* to certain *varieties* of the gold coins of Samudragupta, belonging to the *Standard Type* series, on the *obv.* side of which, the 'king' has been depicted as carrying a long staff-like object surmounted by a flat bar, but having no flag or banner fastened to it.

III. *Spearman Type*

As stated above, the long staff-like object held by the 'king' in his left hand, has been depicted on certain coins, either as having the head of a spear or that of a javelin; but in each case, a flag is to be seen tied to that object.³ Because of this fact, the presumption that naturally

1. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Gupta Coins, Allan, Pl. I. 6, 10 and 11; *J.N.S.I.*, v. Pl. IX. A, 2 and 7.

2. See pp. 25-26 (Class II, four *varieties*).

3. If we consider the object held by the 'king' in his left hand, to be a 'spear' then what is flying behind him, should be taken to be the representation of a 'flag' and not that of a 'banner,' as it would be in the case of a royal 'standard'.

arises is that the 'king' is carrying either a spear or a javelin. Both spear (*śakti*) and javelin (*bhīṇḍipāla*) were used as weapons of war in those days ; and the representation of any one of them, is also in keeping with the marginal inscription occurring on the *obv.* side of those coins. The only objection that might be raised against taking that object to be a spear or javelin, is the flag with which it has been associated. We have stated above, that the object in question may be a spear, and not a javelin, the latter being merely a crude representation of the former. When the spear was used as a weapon of war, no flag should be expected to have been tied to it ; but the thing might have been otherwise, when it was used for some ceremonial purpose. For instance, the *triśūla* (trident) which is nothing but a variety of spear with three pointed heads, is primarily a weapon, though popularly believed to be an attribute of the gods Śiva and Poseidon, and, as such, ordinarily no flag should be expected to be tied to it. But if the same weapon is used for some ceremonial purpose, it may be expected to be made more conspicuous by tying a flag to it. The common *obv.* device of the gold coins of Vāsudeva I and his two successors, Kaṇishka III and Vāsudeva II, may be pointed out here as an illustration thereof.¹ Despite the stylistic differences to be noticed between the gold coins of those three Kushāṇa emperors, their similarity in respect of the *obv.* device, lies at least in the representation of a 'trident with flag' in the left field, which the 'king' faces. Spear undoubtedly has been depicted on certain coins of the pre-Christian period; but nowhere it has been represented for some ceremonial purpose, as in the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta and in the *Aśvamedha Type* of that emperor and of his grandson Kumāragupta I.² Moreover, the depiction

1. *Later Indo-Scythians*, Cunningham, Pl. I. 1-18. For the coins of Vāsudeva I, see *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Greek and Scythic Kings, Pl. XXIX. 12 and 13.

Judging by the 'trident' in the left field (*obv.*), the gold coins of Vāsudeva I are of two varieties. There are some gold pieces of the stater class, on which it does not appear (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Pl. XXIX. 8-10), while on others, it does, as stated above. The gold coins of that emperor, on the *obv.* side of which, the 'trident' appears in the left field, are, in our opinion, his later issues.

2. The earliest representation of 'spear' is to be seen on the *rev.* side of certain Kauśāmbī coins of the 1st cent. B.C., all of which appear to have been issued by the same king. His name is, however, uncertain (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Ancient Indian Coins, Allan, pp. 154-155, Pl. XXI. 4-8). During the same period or probably a little later, were issued Ujjayinī coins of that particular class, on the *obv.* side of which

of a spear with a flag tied to it, in the hand of a mighty ruler who was far-famed for his heroism, prowess, and military genius, specially in the scene of the celebration of his victory, is perfectly suited to the occasion and is also in consonance with the *obv.* marginal legend of the *Standard Type* with which that scene is intimately connected. Thus, taking everything into consideration, we do not find that in this particular case, anything unusual has been done by the Gupta artist in question, which is inconsistent with the motif as conceived by him. We cannot possibly deny the fact that on a large number of coins of the so-called *Standard Type*, the long staff-like object in the left hand of the 'king', has either the head of a spear or that of a javelin, both of which have been clearly depicted. With no amount of reason, we can therefore consider that object to be a 'standard', even though a flag or banner has been shown as tied to it. The practice of making the spear-head conspicuous by tying a flag to it, still continues in this country.

From the different lines of numismatic evidence cited above, it will be seen that all the three names, viz, *Standard-bearer Type*, *Sceptre-holder Type*, and *Spearman Type*, can justly be applied to those gold coins of Samudragupta, on the *obv.* side of which, the 'king' has been represented as holding a long staff-like object. They all tend to show that the *Standard Type* has three separate forms or, in other words, is of three distinct categories, if we judge it by the *obv.* device. Under

along with other symbols, we find 'a soldier standing, facing, and holding a spear in right hand.' Allan considers that human figure to be the god Kārttikeya, without, however, any apparent reason (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 245). Kārttikeya as the guardian deity or protector of the Avanti kingdom, is so far unknown to us. On certain silver and copper coins of the Yaudheyas, which were issued during the 1st cent. A.D., Kārttikeya 'holding spear', appears on the *obv.* side, evidently as the tutelary deity of that tribe (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 270). Spear as depicted on the aforesaid coins, has no sign of a flag about it, as a part of its decoration. Coming to the Gupta period, we find both 'spear' and 'spear with flag', that is to say, the ordinary kind of spear and the ceremonial spear, represented on certain coins of the Imperial Gupta family. Thus, on the gold coins of the *Kārttikeya Type*, which is also known as the *Peacock Type*, issued by Kumāragupta I, the war-god Kārttikeya portrayed on the *reverse*, is to be seen as carrying a spear without a flag tied to it. As we know, 'spear' (*śakti*) is an iconic attribute of that deity. The ceremonial spear is to be seen on the coins of the *Aśvamedha Type*, issued for the first time by Samudragupta and after him, by Kumāragupta I, on which it appears as a part of the *rev.* device. Smith has taken that object to be a 'staff or standard, adorned with pennons', which is not correct (*Ind. Mus. Catal.*, i. p. 101).

such circumstances, it would be highly improper to consider them to be one and the same coin-type, instead of keeping them separate and distinct from one another by applying three different names, one to each. It is against numismatic practice to apply the name of a particular *class*, *variety* or *sub-variety* of coins to the series of which it merely forms a part, as has been done by Smith, Allan, Altekar, and others in the case of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta. We, on the other hand, should have three different names for the coins of those three categories, one for each, and a very suitable name for the series to which they are to be assigned.

The question that confronts us at this stage is: what would be the most suitable name for that series? Obviously, it should not only be totally free from ambiguity, but also be such as would be able to refer clearly to all the *classes* and *varieties* of coins belonging to it. From those two points of view, in our opinion, that series may be aptly named either as *Ajita Type* or as *Parākrama Type*, the latter being preferable to the former. Samudragupta has been styled *Ajita*, i. e., the Invincible One, in the regular marginal legend occurring on the *obv.* side of the coins of the *Standard Type* series; and if we therefore apply the name *Ajita Type* to it, it would not only be able to refer to that coin-type, but also to all the *classes* and *varieties* of coins coming under it.¹ There are, however, certain objections against

1. By regular marginal legend, we mean the longer one which occurs frequently on the *obv.* side of the coins of Samudragupta, belonging to the so-called *Standard Type*. It has been read as, 'Samarasatavitativajayo jitaripurajito divam jayati.' The irregular marginal legend in question is shorter than the other and occurs less frequently on the coins of the same *type*. It reads as, 'Samarasatavitativajayo jitāri(h).'

In the opinion of Altekar, the loss of the last nine syllables of the *obv.* marginal legend of the coin of Samudragupta, belonging to the *Standard Type*, which has been described by Mr. P. L. Gupta, is entirely due to the miscalculation of space on the part of the die-cutter. In order to substantiate his statement, the former has referred to certain Gupta coins which undoubtedly supports his theory (*J.N.S.I.*, viii. pp. 46-47). But the absence of the last nine syllables of the marginal legend occurring on the coins of certain *varieties* of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta, is not due to the inadvertency of the die-cutter, as it appears to be at first sight. For instance, on the gold coin described by Gupta, the marginal legend ends with *jitari*, although it could have been completed, had the die-cutter wished it (*J.N.S.I.*, viii. p. 44). Same is also the case with another coin described by Allan (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, No. 8). Besides these, two coins of the same *type* in the Bodleian Library collection, Oxford (Nos. 687 and 690), point clearly to the very same fact (*J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 101). It has not been therefore possible for us to see eye to eye with Altekar in respect of his theory that the loss of a number of syllables at the end of the marginal legend occurring on the *obv.* side of the coin described by Gupta, is due to the miscalculation of space.

The numismatic evidence cited above, points only to one fact and that is, two *prāsastis* were specially composed for the *obv.* side of the coins of the *Parākrama Type* (*Standard Type*) of Samudragupta, to serve the purpose of marginal legends.

its acceptance, which we would like to bring to the notice of numismatists. First of all, five gold coins of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta have come to our notice so far, of which the *obv.* marginal legend, though complete, does not contain the word *Ajita*. It may be read as, 'Samaraśatavitatavijayo jīṭāri(h).' According to our classification, three of them are of the *Standard-bearer Type*, while the other two are of the *Spearman* and the *Sceptre-holder Type* respectively, since on their *obv.* side, the 'king' appears to be carrying either a standard, a spear (or javelin), or a sceptre.¹ Secondly, the word *Ajita* also occurs in the *obv.* marginal legend of the *Battle-axe Type* of Samudragupta. Thirdly, the same word, compounded separately with the words *vīkramaḥ* and *mahendraḥ*, also occurs as the *rev.* legend of some gold coins of Chandragupta II and Kumāragupta I respectively.² All these are certainly not in favour of our acceptance of the name *Ajita Type* as a suitable substitute either for the *Standard* or for the *Battle-axe Type* of Samudragupta. We do not, however, expect any such difficulty, if we accept the epithet *Parākrama* for renaming the *Standard Type*, since it occurs invariably as the *rev.* legend on the coins of Samudragupta, belonging to that series. The only exception in this case, that has come to our notice so far, is a gold coin discovered at Bamnala (Nimar Dist., Madhya Pradesh), the *obv.* side of which is the same as that of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta, but the *rev.* one appears to be that of the *Archer Type* of Chandragupta II, with the legend *Śrī-Vīkramaḥ* inscribed on it.³ The coin may be an interesting one; but no importance, historical or numismatic, should be attached to it, since it clearly points to the inadvertency of the royal mint: using a wrong *obv.* die with the correct *rev.* die to strike a gold coin of Chandragupta II. Thus, no ambiguity of any kind is likely to occur,

Although there is much similarity between the two, they are not uniform in length; but which one of the two would appear on a particular *variety* of coins, was determined by the availability of space. So far, three *varieties* of coins bearing the shorter legend, have come to our notice, but there may be one or two more. In course of our investigation of this problem, we have also found that the shorter one of the two marginal legends commences usually from the II or the VII o'clock point. For references to those three *varieties* of coins, see the next foot-note.

1. *J.N.S.I.*, viii. p. 44 [Standard]. See also our classification of coins of the *Parākrama Type* given below. *Bayana Hoard Catalogue*, Altekar, p. 35 (No. 138) [Javelin]. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 3 (No. 8) [Sceptre].
2. Cf. *Horseman Type* of Chandragupta II (all *varieties* of coins) and *Horseman Type* of Kumāragupta I (all *classes* and *varieties* of coins).
3. *J.N.S.I.*, v. p. 140.

if we rename the *Standard Type* as *Parākrama Type*. Moreover, the real advantage of using the latter, is its comprehensiveness coupled with preciseness, for referring to the coins in question, irrespective of the appearance of the object in the left hand of the 'king', whether a standard, a sceptre, a javelin, or a spear. No other denomination for that coin-type serves our purposes so well as the one suggested above. In Gupta numismatics, we have already accepted the principle of designating a coin-type with the help of the *rev.* legend associated with it; and the same may be done in the case of the *Standard Type* as well. We, however, do not find any such inherent defect in the name *Parākrama Type* which, besides being very apt as the name of a *type* from the standpoint of the *obv.* device, is free from all ambiguity and is also consistent with the principle adopted by us for coining suitable names, as stated above. Moreover, it can easily include all the *fabrics*, *classes*, *varieties*, and *sub-varieties* which have hitherto comprised the so-called *Standard Type*.¹

Our classification of the *fabrics*, *classes*, and *varieties* of the *Parākrama Type* may now be placed before numismatists, with special reference to the coins considered for the purpose. This is essential for determining the exact place of the coin of Samudragupta under discussion in those divisions. It is as follows:—

PARĀKRAMA TYPE

A. Large Fabric

Class I: (*Obv.*) King carrying a standard with a banner fastened to it, in his left hand; 'Samudra' in the field (written vertically).

Var. (a): Standard surmounted by a bar;
Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point).

(*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 7 and 13; *B.H.C.*, Pl. I. 13; Pl. II. 2 and 5)

Var. (b): Standard as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *left* (at VIII o'clock point).

(*B.H.C.*, Pl. III. 8, 9, 10 and 12)

1. For the *sub-varieties*, see below, p. 45, n. 1.

Var. (c): Standard as above;

Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point);

Crescent near the top edge (between XI and I o'clock points).

(*B.H.C.*, Pl. II. 14)

Var. (d): Standard as above;

Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point);

King wearing a dagger.

(*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 12; *N.S.*, xlv. p. 23)

Var. (e): Standard as above;

Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at II o'clock point) and ending with *jitari* (*jitāriḥ*).

(*J.N.S.I.*, viii. Pl. III. 3; Nos. 687 and 690 of the Bodleian Library collection, Oxford)

Var. (f): Standard surmounted by a ball and a bar;

Marginal legend commencing from the *left* (at VII o'clock point).

(*I.M.C.*, i. Pl. XV. 6. Unique)¹

Class II: (*Obv.*) King carrying a long sceptre surmounted by a bar, in his left hand; '*Samudra*' in the field (written vertically).

Var. (a): Sceptre as above;

Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point).

(*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 6 and 10)

Var. (b): Sceptre as above;

Marginal legend commencing from the *left* (at VII o'clock point) and ending with *jitara* (*jitāriḥ*).

(*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 11; *J.R.A.S.*, 1889, Pl. I. 8. Unique)

1. At first sight, it appears that the mounting of the standard has three sections, viz, a ball, a bar, and another object which is conical in shape, the last one constituting its topmost part. But that uncertain uppermost section of the mounting may as well be the tail of the syllable *ra* or the subscript of the syllable *pu* of the word *ripu* occurring in the marginal legend.

Var. (c): Sceptre as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *top* (at XII o'clock point).
(*J.N.S.I.*, v. Pl. IX. A, 2. Unique)

Var. (d): Sceptre as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *bottom* (at VI o'clock point).
(*J.N.S.I.*, v. Pl. IX. A, 7. A unique specimen which bears also the legend *Śrī-Vikramah* on the *rev.*)

Class III: (*Obv.*) King carrying a long sceptre surmounted by a bar, in his left hand; '*Samudra-gupta*' in the field (written vertically in two parts);
Marginal legend commencing from the *left* (at VIII o'clock point).
(*B.M.C.*, Pl. II. 4 and 5; *B.H.C.*, Pl. III. 14)

Class IV: (*Obv.*) King carrying in his left hand, a long spear or javelin with a flag tied to it; '*Samudra*' in the field (written vertically).

Var. (a): Spear as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point).
(*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 8; *J.R.A.S.*, 1889 Pl. I. 7. Unique)

Var. (b): Javelin as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point).
(*B.H.C.*, Pl. II. 1 and 7)

Var. (c): Javelin as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *left* (at VII o'clock point) and ending with *jatara* (*jīṭāriḥ*).
(*B.H.C.*, Pl. III. 11. Unique)¹

1. The last syllable *ra* of the word *jatara* (*jīṭāriḥ*) occurring on this coin, is indistinct. On it (No. 138 of the *Bayana Hoard Catal.*), we therefore find the marginal legend of the shorter variety mentioned above.

- Var. (d)* : Javelin as above;
 Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at II o'clock point);
 Crescent near the top edge (near XI o'clock point).
 (*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 3 and 4)

B. Small Fabric

Class V : (*Obv.*) King carrying a standard with a banner fastened to it, in his left hand; 'Samudra' in the field (written vertically).

- Var. (a)* : Standard surmounted by a bar;
 Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point).
 (*B.H.C.*, Pl. I. 11; Pl. III. 5)

- Var. (b)* : Standard as above;
 Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point);

No buttons (or pearls) on the left leg of the king's trousers, which has a prominent fold instead above the knee (indicated by a horizontal line on the thigh).

(*B.H.C.*, Pl. III. 2, 3 and 4; *J.N.S.I.*, x. Pl. V. 2)¹

- Var. (c)* : Standard as above;
 Marginal legend commencing from the *left* (at VIII o'clock point).

(*B.H.C.*, Standard Type, No. 137)

1. In connexion with the classification of coins of the Small Fabric, it may be noted here that on some of them, according to Altekar, the 'king' has been represented as wearing a *sakachchha dhoti*, whether long or short, or a half pant (!). We regret to say that after examining minutely some of the coins in question (*J.N.S.I.*, x. p. 96; *B.H.C.*, Nos. 104, 106, 109, 110 and 113), as illustrated on plates (*J.N.S.I.*, x. Pl. V. 2; *B.H.C.*, Pl. III. 2, 3 and 4), we have failed to find clear indication of either of them. On at least two of them (*B.H.C.*, Nos. 104 and 110), buttons (or pearls) of the trousers of the 'king', which are so conspicuous on the coins of the Large Fabric and also on a few of the Small Fabric, figure over his right leg, while on the third one (No. 113), they are somewhat indistinct. Waist-cloth of the Indian style (*dhoti*), as a part of the dress of a Gupta monarch, has undoubtedly come to be represented on coins, but with floating sash, unless he is depicted as seated, as on those of the *Lyrical Type* of Samudragupta and Kumāragupta I or on those of the *Couch Type* of Chandragupta II. Even on some coins of Chandragupta I and Samudragupta, the cord of the waist-band of the king's trousers, has been shown as dangling between the legs (*B.M.C.*, Pl. III. 8; *B.H.C.*, Pl. I. 2; Pl. III. 13).

Var. (d): Standard as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *bottom* (at VI o'clock point).
(*B.H.C.*, Standard Type, No. 143)

Class VI: (*Obv.*) King carrying a long sceptre surmounted by a bar, in his left hand; 'Samudra-gupta' in the field (written vertically in two parts);
Marginal legend commencing from the *left* (at VIII o'clock point).
(*B.H.C.*, Standard Type, No. 152)

Class VII: (*Obv.*) King carrying in his left hand, a long spear or javelin with a flag tied to it; 'Samudra' in the field (written vertically).

Var. (a): Javelin as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at I o'clock point).
(*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 16 and 17; *B.H.C.*, Pl. II. 9)

Var. (b): Javelin as above;
Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at II o'clock point);
Crescent near the top edge (near XI o'clock point).
(*B.M.C.*, Pl. I. 1.)

We have mentioned above the different *fabrics*, *classes*, and *varieties* coming under the *Parākrama Type* (the so-called *Standard Type*) together with their respective characteristic features which enable us to distinguish them from one another. In our classification of the different *varieties*, it will be seen that they have been grouped according as the 'king' has been represented as 'Standard-bearer' (ध्वजधारी), 'Sceptre-holder' (दण्डधारी), and 'Spearmen' (शक्तिधारी) on the *obv.* side of the gold coins belonging to them. We have been compelled to resort to that method of grouping, because, as pointed out above, the 'king' has not been depicted invariably as carrying a 'standard' on the *obv.* side of the coins of the *Standard Type*. It is true, however, that on some of those coins, he has been represented as carrying a 'javelin'; but we have made no attempt to distinguish them from those on which he appears to be

holding a 'spear.' The reason is that a careful examination of a large number of such coins, has convinced us of the fact that the 'javelin', as we see on them, is nothing but a 'spear' crudely represented. If on any particular coin, the object held by the 'king' in his left hand, has been clearly depicted as 'spear', we have specifically mentioned it, as it should be. In our classification of the *varieties* of the Small Fabric group, we had to refer to three interesting coins in the Bayana hoard; but as they were not selected for illustration in the *Catalogue* of the coins belonging to that hoard, we have merely referred to them through their respective registered numbers. We, however, do not consider our classification of the coins of the *Parākrama Type* to be final, since there is every possibility of more *varieties* of coins of that *type* coming to our notice, with the discovery of new hoards, as the three mentioned above.

The *rev.* device of the coins of the *Parākrama Type*, irrespective of its many *classes* and *varieties*, is virtually the same. The only difference that is to be noticed between those coins, so far as that device is concerned, is in respect of the symbol in the upper *left* field. Though its occurrence is regular, no relation has yet been established between the different forms of it, with the *varieties* of the *Parākrama Type*. Occasionally, a second symbol is also to be met with in the upper *right* field; but like the preceding one, the different forms of it, cannot be correlated with any of the *varieties* of the *Parākrama Type* specified above. Moreover, its known forms are very much less in number than the *varieties* of that coin-type. In the upper *right* field of the *rev.* side of our coin, there is also a symbol, but not clear enough to form an exact idea of it.¹

Now coming to the question: to which particular *class* of the *Parākrama Type* our coin belongs, we can only say for the present that, if its *obv.* device is proved beyond doubt to be a novelty and not the product of some mechanical defect of stamping, it will certainly have a place in one of the seven *classes* specified above, and will constitute also a new *variety*. It is therefore necessary to find out at first, whether the peculiarity to be noticed on the *obv.* side of our coin, is due to some defect of minting, which is by no means improbable.

1. The second symbol in the upper *right* field (*rev.*) of our coin, seems to bear the semblance of the one which figures on the coins of Samudragupta, Nos. 7, 8 and 9 (*rev.*; upper *right* field) of the British Museum cabinet (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Allan, p. 3). That symbol has been found to occur also on the *reverse* of the coins of Chandragupta I, belonging to the *King and Queen Type* (*ibid.*, pp. 10-11).

A casual examination of the coin of Samudragupta under discussion, gives undoubtedly the impression that its *obv.* side has been doubly struck and the jugate heads of the 'king' is merely an indication of that fact. But a detailed examination of all that is to be seen on the *obv.* side of that coin, will show that whatever indication of double stamping is manifest on that side, is in the head of the 'king'. If this be a fact—and a careful examination shows that it is so—then its *obv.* device cannot be easily set aside as an instance of double stamping. When the face of a coin, either *obv.* or *rev.*, is restruck, the outline of almost each and every object depicted on that side, appears, either partly or fully, to be double. There are a few gold coins of the Imperial Guptas, which appear to have been stamped twice on the same face; but what we have stated above, can be illustrated in the best possible manner by referring to some such coins belonging to the *Parākrama Type* of Samudragupta. For instance, coin No. 94 of the *Bayana Hoard Catalogue* (Pl. II. 13) reveals very clearly the double stamping of its *obv.* face, through the lower half, where double outline of certain objects, is very distinct. The giant-like appearance of the 'king' and the blurred figure of Garuḍa occurring on that side, are also indications of the very same fact. Besides these, there are other indications of restriking on the *obv.* side of that coin. Again, coin No. 103 of the same *Catalogue* (Pl. III. 1) clearly indicates that its *obv.* face was doubly struck, through a pair of certain objects or parts of them occurring on that side, such as, head of the 'king', nimbus, Garuḍa standard, fire-altar, etc. Likewise, a coin which was discovered only a few years ago at Kusumbhi, in the Unnao Dist., U. P. (now in the State Museum, Lucknow; Reg. No. 10754), also shows that its *obv.* face was doubly stamped. We therefore find on that side, two Garuḍa standards, massive figure of the 'king', blurred figure of Garuḍa, two vertical coin-legends (*Samudra*), and two long sceptres (?). The fire-altar and such other small objects of the *obv.* device are also not distinct.¹ We are as yet not aware of any other coin of the *Parākrama Type* of Samudragupta, of which the *obv.* side was restruck, except the three mentioned above.

If we admit for the time being, that our coin was restruck on the *obv.* side, and that the jugate heads of the 'king', as we see on

1. *J.N.S.I.*, xv. Pl. III. 4 (see also pp. 82-83).

it, is the sole indication of that fact, we can only say that it is a freak and therefore a novelty of the first rate. The *obv.* die had slipped, while the coin was being struck, but the only result of it, is the jugate heads of the 'king'! Neither the figure of Garuḍa surmounting the standard, the upper part of the body of the 'king', and the ornaments worn by him, nor the topmost part of the long staff-like object in his left hand, shows double outline, as it should, had it been doubly stamped. Even the nimbus (*prabhāmaṇḍala*) which is so close to the jugate heads, is a perfect circle and is neither thick nor blurred.¹ We only wonder, how all these could happen, if really there had been any mechanical defect in stamping our coin. Double outline is to be seen only of the face of the 'king', and that is all.

It is difficult to admit that the *obv.* side of our coin appears to have been restruck, since there is no indication of it anywhere in the *obv.* field, right or left, upper or lower, except the double outline of the face of the 'king', as mentioned above. If that much only is the evidence of double stamping available to us, we can only say that it is the rarest novelty in the entire series of Gupta coins! But it does not seem to be so. Taking into consideration what actually happens, when the face of a coin is restruck, with the help of the three gold coins of Samudragupta of the so-called *Standard Type* mentioned above, and such other coins of gold and silver belonging to the rulers of different dynasties, we think that the theory of double stamping, in the case of the present coin, is not altogether beyond cavil. It might have been restruck, but there is no clear indication of that fact. If, however, it was not restruck, what would then be the significance of its *obv.* device?

All artists, without any exception, are victims of imagination, more or less, and the designer of the *obv.* face of our coin, cannot possibly be considered to have enjoyed freedom in that respect. They conceive sometimes novel ideas and give them, too, suitable forms; and, curiously enough, it is through their whims and caprices that they remain in memory for generations. The jugate heads of the 'king' may appear to be a mystery; but it cannot possibly be without any significance, if the hand of an artist had wrought it. The question that arises therefore is: what could possibly be the art-motif behind the *obv.* device of our coin?

1. A small segment of the circle representing the nimbus, is off the flan.

It is not an easy affair indeed to hit upon the exact motif which had captivated the imagination of the artist in question and made him represent the 'king' as confronting Agni, the Fire-god, with two faces. It is, however, possible that the jugate heads of the 'king', as represented on the coin by two faces, are symbolical of something which concerns either Samudragupta or his status, that is to say, his position as a sovereign. He was undoubtedly a hero in the strictest sense of the term, one of the few notable conquerors whom the ancient world could boast of, a renowned military genius of his time, a very powerful but religious-minded monarch, a true patron of learning, a poet of no mean repute, a highly-skilled musician, and a man having genuine regard for all noble qualities of head and heart. Our appreciation of him may have been inadequately expressed, but the riddle of the jugate heads cannot be explained by any of his inherent qualities and personal achievements. Under the circumstances, we can think of only the other alternative and that is, his position as a sovereign, which might have a bearing on the symbolization aimed at by the artist in question.

The Hindu conception of sovereignty, as revealed by the law-givers and the epic writers of Ancient India, has mainly two aspects, viz, *Dharma* and *Danda*. It has also other aspects, but they are of minor nature and on them, there is no unanimity of opinion. According to Manu, kingship is of divine origin and an aggregation of two things, viz, *Dharma*, or Law, and *Danda*, or Administration of the Law. In order to explain the exact relation existing between the two, he puts it allegorically thus:

'The son of Brahmā is Dharma, whom he created for the purpose of giving protection to all living creatures. He then made him king, after vesting him with *Danda* which was made of his (Brahmā's) vigorous power.'¹

It is evident from what has been stated by Manu, that kingship comprises *Dharma* and *Danda*, that is to say, is composed of Law and its Administration, the latter being the same as the executive power

1. *Mānavadharmāśāstra*, vii. 14.

तदर्थं सर्वभूतानां गोप्तारं धर्ममात्मजम् ।
ब्रह्मतेजोमयं दण्डमसृजत्पूर्वमीश्वरः ॥

of the king, which was believed to be the gift of Brahmā. The theory of kingship is also enunciated in the Śāntiparva of the *Mahābhārata*, wherein it is said that King Kshupa received *Danḍa*, based on *Dharma*, from the Lokapālas, or the Guardian Angels, which they had received previously from the sage Bṛiḡu.¹ Kingship was, thus, conceived by the ancient legists and others to be an embodiment of *Dharma* and *Danḍa*, the two components being related to and dependent on each other for their respective functions. Since kingship is inseparable from *Dharma* and *Danḍa*, the king has been styled *dharmādhipa* as well as *danḍadhara* in the epics. In Ancient India, while *Danḍa* was symbolized by the sceptre (*danḍa*), we do not know as yet, what represented *Dharma* in the person of a sovereign.

We have stated above, our main reasons for doubting the fact that the *obv.* side of the present coin was restruck. We have also cited above, numismatic evidence to substantiate the same. If any numismatist still believes that it was doubly stamped on the *obv.* side, we would like him to consider very carefully at least one of our objections and find out a satisfactory explanation for the same. He should explain, citing parallel cases, why the outline of the nimbus (*prabhāmaṇḍala*), which is so close to the jugate heads of the 'king', is a perfect circle (a small segment at the top is off the flan) and is neither thick nor blurred, as pointed out above. The nimbus should have also a double, thick, or blurred outline along with the jugate heads. He should try to find out also a plausible explanation for the complete absence of double outline in respect of all the other objects near the jugate heads. These are hard facts on which our arguments are based. We should consider all those points critically, before upholding the theory of double stamping, which is undoubtedly the easiest way of solving the numismatic problem presented by our coin.

A very pertinent question that may be asked in this connexion is: if the *obv.* face of the present coin was not restruck, why have not similar coins of Samudragupta come to light anywhere in Northern India so far? The question is highly problematical, but its answer is not far enough to seek. The artists or type-designers employed in the royal mint, might devise a number of new coin-types, but the

1. *Mahābhārata*, Śāntiparva, cxxii. 38 (B.O.R.I. Ed.).

मृगुर्ददावृषिभ्यस्तु तं दण्डं धर्मसंहितम् ।

ऋषयो लोकपालेभ्यो लोकपालाः क्षुपाय च ॥

decision regarding their acceptance for currency purpose, would finally rest with the supreme head of the State. Public opinion on a particular coin-type, should also be expected to count much for its retention by the State or its rejection. For instance, on the *obv.* side of that unique gold coin of Chandragupta I, belonging to the *Standard Type*, which was acquired by Rodgers at Haripur (E. Punjab), a *triśūla* (trident) is to be found in the left field, exactly at the place where the Garuḍa standard figures on the coins of his son Samudragupta. The depiction of a *triśūla* on the *obv.* side of that earliest specimen of the gold coinage of the Imperial Guptas, is undoubtedly due to the influence of its Kushāṇa prototype. But the depiction of a typical Śaiva symbol on the coins of a king who belonged to an orthodox Vaishṇava family, is certainly not expected to receive as much consideration as it deserves.¹ The inevitable result of it, was that, after their first issue which was limited to a specified number of gold coins, that coin-type was discarded as unsuitable for the Imperial Gupta family, and in its place was substituted the *King and Queen Type* with a definite political motive. Since the *Standard Type* of Emperor Chandragupta I was discontinued, as we believe, after its first appearance, coins of that *type* have become extremely rare. This is more than evident from the fact that only one coin of that particular series has come to light so far and that, too, in a locality which lay far beyond the territorial limits of that Gupta emperor. Since it migrated far to the west and got mixed up with the gold coins of the Later Kushāṇas, which were then current in the Punjab, and with which it undoubtedly bears many features in common, it escaped the danger of being collected and melted down in any one of the royal mints of the Guptas, as one that had been withdrawn from circulation by the order of the issuer himself. Likewise, the singularity of the gold coin of the *Chakravikrama Type* of Chandragupta II, suggests that gold coins belonging to that series, were also withdrawn from circulation by the State, not long after their issue. In this particular case, too, the only fact that may justly be considered to be the reason for their withdrawal, is that the *obv.* device of those coins, which was definitely aimed at the glorification of and giving wide publicity to the ardent religious devotion of that orthodox Vaishṇava ruler (*paramabhāgavata*), was not appreciated.

1. Cf. Chhabra, B. Ch., 'Coin-legends of Gupta Emperors and Viṣṇusahasranāma,' *J.N.S.I.*, ix. pp. 137-145.

It was felt difficult, as we think, to conceive the idea that Lord Vishṇu came down from his celestial abode to the earth, to meet Emperor Chandragupta II, for the purpose of blessing him and also to present to him a souvenir as a memento of their meeting, being immensely pleased with the monarch's fervent religious devotion. If this be the suggestion of the *obv.* device, we can only say that an artist in his flight of imagination, would not be able to rise higher than that! The meeting of the immortal and the mortal, Chakrapāṇi (Vishṇu) and Vikramāditya, in the mundane world, as the main theme of the *obv.* side and the *rev.* legend *Chakravikrama* which is suggestive of the same, were not countenanced with favour by the State, and also perhaps by the public, for certain important reasons. The *obv.* device of the coins of the *Chakravikrama Type* clearly belongs to the domain of myths and legends characterizing the Epic Age, and is therefore not relevant to time. What is still worse is that it runs the risk of being treated as posthumous, i. e., conceived and designed after the death of the emperor whose memory it preserves. For these reasons which are more than apparent, the art-motif of the *obv.* device came to be considered to be puerile; and all coins belonging to the *Chakravikrama Type* were ordered to be withdrawn from circulation. So far, we know only of one coin bearing the figures of Lord Vishṇu and Chandragupta II on the *obverse*, and the legend *Chakravikrama* on the *reverse*. That most interesting coin (*B.H.C.*, Pl. XVIII. 14) was found in the Bayana hoard; and although a decade had passed since its discovery, it has remained unique. It is, however, not possible for numismatists to offer any satisfactory explanation for the extreme rarity or uniqueness of coins belonging to certain *types* and *varieties*, as, for instance, in the case of those belonging to the *Lyrist Type* or the *King and Queen Type* of Kumāragupta I. The unique gold coin of the *Lyrist Type* of Samudragupta mentioned above, which should now be considered to belong to *Var. B* of the Small Fabric of that coin-type, is also a case to the point. Two gold coins discovered in the Bayana hoard, which belong to the *Aśvamedha Type, Var. B* ('Horse to left') of Kumāragupta I, may also be mentioned here, as illustrations thereof. Stylistically, they are undoubtedly archaic than those belonging to *Var. A* ('Horse to right') of that coin-type and therefore may be considered to

be earlier issues. Instances may be multiplied to bear out the truth of our remarks regarding the extreme rarity of the gold coins of certain *types* and *varieties* issued by the Imperial Guptas.¹

The uniqueness of the present coin, depending, as it does, only on the figure of the 'king', as portrayed on its *obv.* side, which clearly distinguishes it from others of the same *type*, is difficult to explain. We, however, presume that the *obv.* device of the jugate heads of the 'king' within a single circle representing the ring of nimbus (*prabhāmaṇḍala*), was not considered by the State to be suitable for currency purpose; and, consequently, coins bearing the same, were not issued for the second time. The art-motif as conceived by the designer of that coin-type, may be very interesting, but it is too subtle to be understood by the public. Far from appreciating the artistic merit and novelty of conception manifested by them, people would consider the coins of this particular *variety* of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta to be doubly stamped pieces. That would certainly not be creditable either for the artist or for the issuing authority. It is probably for this reason that the issue of this *variety* of gold coins, was discontinued by the order of the supreme head of the State.

Our presumption is that it is the dual capacity of a sovereign, viz, the guardianship of *Dharma*, Law, and the supreme authority over *Danḍa*, or Administration of the Law, that was conceived by the artist in question to be a suitable subject for representation on the coins of Samudragupta, because of his possession of manifold noble qualities of a king and the unrestricted support given by him to the cause of *Dharma* which like 'a bulwark defended (lit. enclosed) him' (*dharmanprāchīrabandhaḥ*).² In order to achieve his end, the artist appears to have symbolically represented his master as confronting Agni, so as to make him a witness to the part played by him so honestly as king, whether in the sphere of *Dharma* or in that of *Danḍa*. Crude though it may be, the symbolism which he could think of, was to depict the king with jugate heads, each suggesting a particular aspect of kingship, as inculcated by the custodians of ancient law which governed the Aryan State and society. The *obv.* device

1. *J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 145; *Bayana Hoard Catalogue*, Altekari, pp. 208-209; pp. 302-303; pp. 306-307; and pp. 299-300 (*Vars. A and B*).
2. *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, iii. Fleet, p. 6 (*Ins. line 15*).

as conceived by that artist, may not be free from complexity, but we do not find at least any absurdity in the idea which he has sought to express thereby. In an art-motif, what is liable to be considered to be absurdity, is, in reality, expediency, to which some time an artist will be found to resort, to express his own thought, having no other alternative to do so; or he may, for that purpose, exercise his own discretion to obtain the best possible result, if there be any alternative. The two factors, viz, expediency and the artist's choice, should not therefore escape us, whenever an art-motif would appear palpably or glaringly to be a piece of absurdity. A few illustrations to explain our point of view perhaps will not be out of place here. It is a patent fact that the expression of divinity of a human figure to be portrayed on coin, was a problem of no mean magnitude to the ancient die-cutters or rather the designers of coin-types, both Indian and foreign; and there is no dearth of numismatic evidence to show that both the groups had to exercise their intelligence and power of imagination to evolve some suitable means to solve the same. Curiously enough, the only means to realize that objective, which both the groups had invented independently of each other, was to put a few upward strokes above or near the head, to signify the radiation of light from the body, which is traditionally a common divine characteristic. The first manifestation of that symbolism in North-Western India and the Punjab, on the coins of a foreign ruler, is on those of Demetrius I, and the deity so represented is Cynthia, or Artemis, the celestial huntress and sylvan goddess of the Greeks (*B.M.C.*, Pl. III. 1). Bronze coins of that Indo-Greek king, bearing the figure of 'Artemis radiate' on the *reverse*, appear to have been issued between c. 185 and 170 B.C. The same deity with radiant head also figures on some coins of the Indo-Scythian king Maues (*B.M.C.*, Pl. XVI. 4). But, perhaps, the perfection of the artistic device in question is to be seen in the figure of Śiva as depicted particularly on the double staters and staters of the Kushāṇa Emperor Wema Kadphises who appears to have ruled in Afghanistan and North-Western India between c. 63 and 78 A.D. (*B.M.C.*, Pl. XXV. 6-9). While we do not believe that this particular numismatic device to signify godhood, had influenced the Indian artists engaged by the Hindu rulers to design their coin-types, it is a fact that the coins of some of the Pañchāla kings, which appear to have been struck between c. 130 B.C. and 78 A.D.,

depict human figures in the same manner, obviously to serve the very same purpose. We, thus, find the god Agni portrayed on the coins of Agnimitra, with a few strokes above him, suggesting thereby his flaming or radiant head; and the same is the method of indicating the emission of rays as adopted for depicting the female deities like Bhadrā, Phalgunī, and Bhūmi (Bhūdevī or Mahīśakti) on the coins of Bhadrāghoṣa, Phalgunīmitra, and Bhūmimitra respectively.¹ The same method was also applied for the representation of the War-god Kārttikeya and of his consort Devasenā on some coins of the Yaudheyas, on which they have been depicted with single head.² It is evident therefore that the only suitable means of attributing divinity to a human figure portrayed on coins, which the Indian and foreign artists could think of, at least before A.D. 78, was to put a few upward strokes above or near its head. This earliest numismatic device, however, failed to capture the imagination of the artists in the service of Kaṇishka I, since we find the adoption of an entirely different device, better or worse than the former, on

1. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Coins of Ancient India, Pls. XXVIII. 8-14; XXVIII. 1-3; XXVII. 11-14; and XXVIII. 4-7.

The human figure depicted on the reverse of the coins of the Pañchāla king Bhūmimitra, has been taken by Allan and Bidyabinod to be that of a male; but while the former considers him to be the king of the *nāgas* (snakes), the latter identifies him with the Fire-god Agni (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Coins of Ancient India, Intro. p. cxviii; *Ind. Mus. Catal.*, i. Supplementary, p. 53). A sober opinion, however, has been expressed by Smith on the identity of that figure, for he merely observes, 'Figure like that of Agni on coins of Agnimitra' (*Ind. Mus. Catal.*, i. p. 187). What we actually find on the aforesaid coins, is a human figure with five upward strokes above the head, standing inside the sacred enclosure (*pūjāśilāprākāra*), facing front, and holding one hand by another before him or her, both being slightly bent at the elbow. The front part of the enclosure, which appears to be of the Sanchi rail-pattern, has two high corner-pillars, one at each end, surmounted by three bars. Since the enclosure is either square or rectangular, the existence of four such corner-pillars may be presumed (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Pl. XXVIII. 7). There is nothing on the *rev.* side of those coins, which might indicate, even faintly, whether the human figure represents a male or a female. Under such circumstances, we are unable to accept the theory of Allan, that the figure in question personifies the king of the *nāgas* (Ananta-nāga or Śeṣha-nāga) and that the five short strokes are his hoods. We are equally unable to accept the opinion of Bidyabinod that the same represents Agni, the Fire-god. We are definitely of the opinion that the figure stands for the goddess Bhūmi (Bhūdevī, Bhūśakti, Kṣhiti or Mahīśakti) with rays issuing from her head. Her radiant head clearly indicates that she is a divine being; and judging the question of her identity from the standpoint of the numismatic practice followed by the members of the royal family to which Bhūmimitra belonged, she can only be the goddess Bhūmi. Cunningham is right in taking those upward strokes to be rays (*Coins of Ancient India*, p. 83). We only wonder, why the representation of Agni or Ananta-nāga on the coins of Bhūmimitra, could possibly be suspected, when there is a deity by the name of Bhūmi in Hindu pantheon!

2. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Coins of Ancient India, Pl. XXXIX. 22 (Kārttikeya) and 20 (Devasenā). See also pp. 270-272.

some coins of that ruler, to meet the same end. This new device which may justly be said to have been inspired by sculptural technique, invented with the sole intention of giving expression to the divine character of a human figure, was to draw a circle round the head, to signify the ring of halo or nimbus (*prabhāmaṇḍala*).¹ The deities so adorned on the coins of that Kushāṇa monarch are, Mīro (Sun-god Mihira or Mihr), Ēlios (Sun-god Helios), Mao (Moon-god Māh), Oado (Wind-god Vāta or Vada), Pharro (Fire-god Farr), Boddo (Buddha), Oesho (Īśa or Śiva), Ardokhsho (Demigoddess of Prosperity, Ārddhayakshi?), and Nana (Divine Mother, Devī Nanā).² This simplest method of expressing divinity was kept up by the successors of Kaṇishka I, like Huvishka, Vāsudeva I,

1. Cf. Foucher, A., *L'Art Gréco-Bouddhique du Gandhāra*, i. p. 622 (Paris, 1905).

2. During the period, when the Scythians, the Parthians, and the Kushāṇas successively exercised political supremacy over North-Western India, Śaivism predominated over all other Brahminical cults in that region. This is apparent not only from the coins of some Partian and Kushāṇa rulers, but also from the *Mahāvastu*, an important Buddhist Sanskrit text, in which Īśa (Śiva) figures as the supreme Brahminical deity. *Mahāvastu* belongs to the canon of the Lokottaravādins and appears to have been mainly compiled in North-Western India, in Early Kushāṇa period. Philologically, the prefixing of *O* to *esho*, as we find on the *rev.* side of some Kushāṇa coins bearing the anthropomorphic form of Śiva, is due to the phonetic phenomenon known as *Indistinct Articulation* which is specially to be noticed, when a Sanskrit word which is rather difficult to pronounce, is represented in a foreign tongue (Peile, J., *Philology*, p. 32).

We consider the name Ardokhsho to be the phonetic variant of Sanskrit *Ārddhayakshī*. That the deity in question is associated with Prosperity, like Tyche of the Greeks and Lakshmi (daughter of Śiva and consort of Vishṇu) of the Hindus, is apparent from her two iconic attributes, viz., a bunch of lotuses (with long stalks) and the *cornucopiae*, the Greek symbol of Plenty and Prosperity, which she carries in her right and left hand respectively. The *Taddhita* form of *riddhi*, prosperity, is *ārdha*; and from this point of view, the term *Ārddhayakshī* may be considered to be an appellation or epithet of the Yakshi Riddhi, consort of the Yaksha Kubera who in Hindu mythology, is the 'King of the Yakshas' (*Yaksharāja*) and 'Lord of Wealth' (*Dhanapati*). Since both Kubera and Riddhi were believed to be the 'Bestowers of Wealth', the former has been styled *Dhanada* and the latter, *Lakshmi* in the epics. According to the same sources, Lakshmi, consort of Vishṇu, is the goddess, and Riddhi, queen of Kubera, the demigoddess of Wealth. Like her husband Kubera, Riddhi also occupies a prominent place in the pantheon of Mahāyāna Buddhism. She was, thus, considered by the Kushāṇa artists to be an important deity who should be represented on coins; but instead of mentioning her by name, since she has many names (Bhadrā, Lakshmi, and Riddhi), they have used her most suitable and appropriate epithet *Ārddhayakshī*, 'the Demigoddess of Prosperity', for expressing her identity. Hoffmann, West, Stein, Paruck and Thanawala consider Ardokhsho to be an Iranian deity; but there is a sharp difference of opinion amongst them, as regards her identity.

According to the *Nighaṇṭuka*, in Vedic language, the word *nanā* is a familiar expression for 'mother', as *tata*, for 'father' (Skt. *tāta*). The female deity portrayed on some Kushāṇa coins and mentioned as 'Nana', 'Nanaia' or 'Nanashao' should therefore be considered to be the goddess Nanā, the Divine Mother (Devī Nanā). Her association with Īśa (Śiva) on other Kushāṇa coins, bearing the legends 'Oesho' and 'Nana' along with their respective anthropomorphic forms, clearly show that she is none else than the goddess Ambikā or Pārvatī, consort of Śiva, who, according to Hindu mythology, is the 'world-mother' (*jaganmātā* or *jagadambā*) and the 'supreme goddess' (*paramesvarī*).

Kaṇishka III, and Vāsudeva II, as is evident from their coins; and by the time the Guptas came into power, it had already become an established numismatic practice. The occurrence of that ring or circle behind the head of a deity, as depicted on the gold coins of Chandragupta I and his successors up to Vainyagupta, as well as on those of Śaśāṅka, Viṣṇugupta Chandrāditya, Samāchāradeva Narendrāditya, Jayagupta, and Virasena Kramāditya, clearly points to that fact. Its appearance on coins after c. 750 A.D. for the afore-said purpose, is so far unknown. The practice seems to have been discontinued about that time and was not revived afterwards, as has been evidenced by a unique gold coin of the Pāla king Devapāla (c. 810-850 A.D.) on the *rev.* side of which, the goddess Lakṣmī has been depicted without that circle behind her head.¹

Let us now see, how the divine origin of a human figure portrayed on coins, was given expression by the die-cutters or the designers of coin-types in Ancient India. Like the expression of divinity, it had also become a serious problem to them; but they actually faced it, when the rulers of a particular family, who claimed divine origin, wanted the same to be expressed on their own coins. An old belief that had somehow become deep-rooted in the mind of all Mongoloid peoples in China, is that the paramount sovereign is the 'Son of Heaven' (*T'ien-tseu*), since he has to carry out all heavenly mandates on the earth, as its agent. The Emperors of China were, thus, believed to be 'Sons of Heaven.' Since the Kushāṇas, the members of the Kouei-chouang clan of the Yüeh-chih tribe, were of Mongoloid origin, they also considered their overlords to be 'Sons of Heaven.' The Chinese term *T'ien-tseu* came to be translated into Sanskrit as *Devaputra*, probably in the reign of Wema Kadphises (Kadphises II); and since then, all the Kushāṇa emperors were styled *Devaputra* in this country. This fact is evident not only from an inscription which seems to belong to the time of the aforesaid Kushāṇa monarch, but also from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of the time of Samudragupta.² The problem that confronted the

1. *J.N.S.I.*, xiii. p. 123.

2. For the various Chinese transcriptions of the name 'Kushāṇa' and its variants: 'Khushāṇa,' 'Gushāṇa,' 'Kurshāṇa,' and 'Kushāṇa' (the last two forms occurring in certain Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions discovered at Niya, in Central Asia), see *J.A.O.S.*, lxvii. p. 299. We have, however, accepted the Chinese form 'Kouei-chouang' (also spelt as 'Kuei-shuang') in preference to others.

early Kushāṇa artists was, how to express the divine origin of Wema Kadphises on his coins. The only solution of it, which they could think of, was to put a few upward strokes over his shoulders, to signify flames rising from his body. This crude method of representing a *T'ien-tseu* or *Devaputra* on coins, was retained by Kanishka I and even by Huvishka; but in the reign of the latter, a new device was introduced for that very purpose. The device in question is, to draw a circle behind the head of the 'king', suggesting thereby the ring of halo or nimbus (*prabhāmaṇḍala*). We have stated above that the later device, for the expression of godhood, came into existence in the reign of Kanishka I, on whose coins, it is to be seen for the first time. It is, thus, on the coins of Huvishka, that the 'king' and the 'deity' came to be treated in the very same manner or, in other words, kingship was raised to the rank of divinity. On the basis of this new device, it is possible for us to distinguish the earlier issues ('King with flaming shoulders') of that Kushāṇa monarch from his later ones ('King nimbate').¹ The successors of Huvishka belonging to the Kushāṇa family, followed the new method of representing

There are reasons to believe that the Kushāṇa monarch referred to in the Panjar Stone Inscription and the Taxila Silver-scroll Inscription, belonging to the year 122 and the year 136 respectively of the old Scythian Era, was Wema Kadphises (*Cor. Ins. Ind.*, ii. 1. pp. 70 and 77). In the latter, imperial dignity has been attributed to him, as in the *obv.* and *rev.* legends of his gold coins. In respect of the proposed identification, the two essential points that are to be considered are, (i) Kujula Kadphises (Kadphises I), according to the Chinese sources, did not rule over the regions lying on the eastern side of the Indus, and, thus, had no authority over the areas implied by the find-spots of the aforesaid inscriptions, and (ii) a different system of dating came into existence in the reign of Kanishka I; and, as indicated by the epigraphic records belonging to his reign, it may be said to have been strictly followed. We are, thus, led to believe that the Kushāṇa ruler referred to in the Taxila Silver-scroll Inscription of the year 136, as 'Maharaja Rajatiraja Devaputra Khushana' was Wema Kadphises (Kadphises II) who, according to the same Chinese sources (mentioned as Yen-kao-tchen), ruled over India (T'ien-tchou) with the help of his governor.

The successors of Wema Kadphises, viz, Kanishka I, Vasishka, Huvishka, and Kanishka II, are definitely known to have borne the title *Devaputra*, but the same cannot be said with certainty of the Kushāṇa rulers like Vāsudeva I, Kanishka III, and Vāsudeva II, who came after them, for want of information. But considering the fact that a Kushāṇa king has been definitely styled 'Daivaputra-Shāhi-Shāhānu-shāhi', that is to say, by the three well-known imperialistic titles of his ancestors (*Daivaputra* being the *Taddhita* form of *Devaputra*, appears to have been used as an adjective of *Shāhi* and *Shāhānu-shāhi*), in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, the use of the title *Devaputra* by the Later Kushāṇas or, as they styled themselves, the 'Kushāṇaputras,' at least up to the time of that Gupta emperor, is an established fact (*Cor. Ins. Ind.*, iii. Fleet, p. 8). An inscription discovered near Mathura, clearly indicates that such a Kushāṇaputra, bearing the title *Devaputra*, ruled as far east as the Yamunā, prior to A.D. 280, and the same may be true of the earlier Kushāṇaputras as well.

1. A comparison of the coins, Nos. 117 and 123 with Nos. 125 and 126, as illustrated in the *Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. Pl. XVIII, will bear out the truth of our remark.

their divine origin or agency, in preference to the old one, as is evident from their coins; and by the time Chandragupta I came to the throne, it had already become a popular numismatic practice. This is apparent from the fact that we not only find it on the gold coins issued by him, but also on those of his imperial successors, both earlier and later, in Magadha. Even on the gold coins of Ghaṭotkachagupta Kramāditya, Samāchāradeva Narendrāditya and Jayagupta, the same feature on the *obv.* side, is to be met with. This novel method of signifying royalty seems to have been discontinued after c. 750 A.D., when Gopāla I, the founder of the Pāla Dynasty, ascended the throne. Our presumption is based on the fact that the nimbus behind the head of the 'king' portrayed on the *obv.* side, is not to be met with on that unique gold coin of the third Pāla king Devapāla referred to above.

Strange indeed is sometimes an artist's imagination and equally strange is sometimes his means of giving shape to it. While the Gupta artists strictly adhered to the Kushāṇa device, introduced at the time of Huvishka, i.e., 'King nimbate', for the purpose of signifying royalty in the coin-types designed by them, it did not find favour in the eyes of that particular artist who was responsible for designing the coin-type of the Maukhari king Īśānavarman. He invented a new method of attributing royalty to the person whose 'head' only was to be shown on his coins. The device is a simple one and that is, to depict the 'head' as *chandramauli*, 'moon-crested.' Thus, on the *obv.* side of the silver coins of that ruler, we find a 'crescent' on the king's 'head'. This new numismatic *style* of signifying royalty was continued by his successors, Śarvavarman and Avantivarman, as evidenced by their silver issues, and was even adopted, for the very same purpose, by King Prabhākaravardhana *alias* Pratāpaśīla of the royal house of Pushyabhūti of Sthāneśvara, on whose silver issues, the same device is to be met with on the *obv.* side, but with slight modification. Whereas on the aforesaid Maukhari coins, an ordinary 'crescent' is placed slightly behind the crown of the king's 'head', on those of Pratāpaśīla (name as given on coins), we find the 'crescent' exactly at the crown of 'head', with two knobs, one at each end. This new style of representing 'crescent on head' (*chandramauli*) was continued by his son Harsha Śīlāditya, as evidenced by his silver and copper coins. A large number

of silver coins issued by the Maukhari and the Pushyabhūti kings mentioned above, having *Moon-crested Head of King* as their common *type* of the *obv.* side, have been found in the Bhitaura hoard (Fyzabad Dist., U.P.) along with a solitary specimen of the copper coinage of Emperor Harshavardhana.¹ Silver coins of Īśānavarman and Śarvavarman discovered elsewhere, also bear the same *type* on the *obverse*.²

We have given above a few illustrations to show that the designers of coin-types in Ancient India, like all artists, were at times victims of strange imagination and like them, too, sometimes devised novel means of giving expression to it. Coins of the Gupta emperors, though comparatively modern, are also not free from such oddities. Instances may be cited from Gupta numismatics to bear out the truth of our remark. For example, the designer of the *obv.* side of that unique gold coin of the *Chakravikrama Type* mentioned above, conceived the idea of giving expression to the ardent devotion of the Vaishṇavite Gupta Emperor, the Paramabhāgavata Chandragupta II, for Lord Viṣṇu, and in order to achieve his end, has represented them as standing face to face, and, what is still worse, has also shown the latter as offering a gift to the former, obviously in token of his blessings (*B.H.C.*, Pl. XVIII. 14). Oddly enough, it never occurred to that artist, that the art-motif which made the mortal and the immortal meet together, indirectly suggested the posthumous character of the coin that bore it. We have already drawn the attention of numismatists to this defective character of that unique coin-type. A little less fantastic, though not of refined taste, is the motif of the *obv.* side of the gold coins belonging to the *Var. B* of the *Peacock Type* (*Kārttikeya Type*) of Kumāragupta I, in which the 'king', naked up to the waist and clad in a short loin-cloth, is represented as snapping his fingers and dancing merrily before a dancing peacock, casting his royal dignity and all sense of decency and decorum to the winds (*B.M.C.*, Pl. XV. 14; *B.H.C.*, Pl. XXVI. 13)! Such excesses are, however, not to be met with on the coins of the foreign rulers issued in India.

1. *J.R.A.S.*, 1906, pp. 843-850 (with Plate); *Lucknow Museum Catalogue*, Gupta and Maukhari Coins, Brown, pp. 39-45.
2. *J.A.S.B.*, 1894, p. 193; Cunningham, *Coin. of Mediaeval India*, Pl. II. 12; *J.R.A.S.*, 1889, p. 136.

If the *obv.* type of the present coin be the creation of some artist, then its motif which cannot but be a reflection of his thoughts, would admit of the interpretation given below, in the light of the legends occurring on the *obv.* side.

‘The invincible (*ajita*) Samudragupta, the vanquisher of his enemies (*jitaripu*), and the sole representative of *Dharma* and *Danḍa* on the earth, whose emblem is the figure of *Garuḍa*, the king of birds and killer of snakes, after winning victory extended over a hundred battles (*samaraśatavitatavijaya*), has entered the place of sacrifice, grasping firmly his *dhvaja* as a sign of victory, and is now worshipping *Agni*, the Divine Messenger. As the king offers oblations at the altar of *Agni*, flames rise up in the air, indicating thereby that the deity being pleased with the king’s devotion, is carrying the fame of his heroism and prowess, unexcelled on the earth, to heaven and spreading it there, which eventually overwhelms its denizens.¹ It is, thus, that this valiant king, after conquering the earth, is now establishing his authority in the realm of the gods (*divaṁ jayati*).’²

The *rev.* legend merely supplements the marginal inscription of the *obv.* side and signifies that the coin was issued by him who is the personification of Valour (*Parākramaḥ*).

We have suggested above, a plausible meaning of the double face of the ‘king’, as depicted on the *obv.* side of the present coin. If, however, we take the nimbus to stand for a mirror which had been introduced in the *obv.* device, to suggest the elaborate decorations of the king’s *yajñśālā*, perhaps an easier solution of our problem may be offered. It will then suggest that, as the ‘king’ stands

1. For the representation of *Agni* as messenger (*dūta*) and also as carrier (*vāhaka*) from the terrestrial to the celestial world, see *Īgreda*, viii. 44. 3(a). It runs as follows:—

अग्निं दूतं पुरो दधे ह यवाहमुप ब्रुवे ।

2. The suggestion that Samudragupta’s fame (*kīrti*) was carried or transported to heaven, comes from a passage in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, wherein it is said :

“.....सर्वपृथिवीविजयजनितोदयव्याप्तनिखिलावनितलां
कीर्तिसितस्त्रिदशपतिभवनगमनावामललितसुखविचरयाम्.....”

before the fire-altar, one of the many mirrors that were hung up there, for the purpose of decorating the *yajñaśālā* for the ceremonial worship of Agni, catches the image of the king's face sideways and reflects it. If either of the two be the suggestion which the artist had sought to represent through the *obv. type* designed by him, it should be considered to be a new *variety*. In the classification of the coins belonging to the *Parākrama Type* series of Samudragupta, as given above, its place should then be in Class I of the Large Fabric group, numbered as *Var. (g)*.¹

1. See above, p. 24.

Class I : (*Obv.*) King carrying a standard with a banner fastened to it, in his left hand ; 'Samudra' in the field (written vertically).

Var. (g) : Standard surmounted by a bar;

Marginal legend commencing from the *right* (at 1 o'clock point) ;

King standing to left with jugate heads (as if standing by the side of a mirror which reflects his head).

Judging by the specialities to be noticed in the *obv.* device of the gold coin under discussion, viz, the jugate heads of the 'king' within a single ring of halo, the belt of the 'king,' which is above its usual position, and the chain mail or heavy embroidery on the left shoulder of the king's riding coat, it can justly be considered to be a new *variety* of the *Parākrama Type*, and not a *sub-variety*. In this connexion, it may be noted here that the *sub-varieties* of the *Parākrama Type* are to be distinguished, in respect of the *obv.* device, by the difference in the form of the letter *ma*, whether of the Eastern or of the Western variety, and in the pose of the 'king,' whether erect or oblique, and with regard to the *rev.* device, in the occurrence of the symbol, whether one or two (irrespective of the variety), as also in the representation of the legs of the throne of the female deity. On the *obv.* side, much difference is to be noticed in the representation of the Garuḍa standard as well, whether we take cognizance of it or not. The *sub-varieties* of the *Parākrama Type* do not come within the scope of our investigation for the present.

It may be further noted here, that the gold coin bearing the names of Gaḍahara (or Gaḍakhara) and Samudra, cannot be placed in any particular *class*, *variety*, or *sub-variety* of the *Parākrama Type*, because of its stylistic difference with the known coins of that *type*. It is extremely doubtful, whether that coin was issued by Samudragupta at all. It seems rather to have been issued by a Later Kushāṇa king named Gaḍaha(kha)ra. Except for the legends and the monosyllabic words which are in the earliest form of the Gupta script, its *obv.* as well as the *rev.* device bear strong Kushāṇa affinity. It belongs to the Large Fabric group, like most of the Kushāṇa gold coins of the later period, and is so far unique (cf. Cunningham, *Later Indo-Scythians*, pp. 30-32, and Pl. II. 11).

We have stated above, the main objections against our acceptance of the theory that the present coin is a doubly stamped piece, though at first sight, it appears to be so. They are purely of technical nature; and we have substantiated them also by referring to a number of coins of the *Parākrama Type* (*Standard Type*), known to us so far, which clearly appear to have been restruck on the *obv.* side.¹ If any numismatist, despite those hard facts and concrete cases, maintains that our coin was stamped twice on the *obv.* face, he should, in the interest of scientific research, adduce reasons to justify his point of view. It is, however, expected that his reasons would be of technical nature and also substantiated by numismatic evidence of the period concerned, as has been done by us. That would certainly be for the furtherance of our knowledge of Gupta numismatics, which is by no means comprehensive as yet.

1. See above, p. 30.

SAMUDRAGUPTA

(2) *Vīṇāvādaka Type (Lyrist Type)*(Small Fabric)¹*Provenance*: Fyzabad Dist., U.P. *Weight*: 120.34 grs. (7.990 gms.)*Metal*: Gold, 18.75 ct.*Condition*: Slightly worn; there is an indentation on the reverse, across the left arm of the deity.*Fabric*: Round, thick, and of small size; diameter .75.

Obverse: King to left, nimbate, and seated on a high-backed couch, is playing on a lyre-like stringed instrument (*vīṇā*) having a long and curved neck, which rests on his lap. He is dressed in coif and waist-cloth, worn in Indian style, but rolled up to the knee, and is wearing ear-rings, necklace, and wristlets. The upper part of his body is bare. His left leg is stretched, but is slightly bent at the knee, while the right one is fully bent and drawn backwards. His left foot has no support, but the right one rests on a small footstool of which only the flat top is visible. Three legs of the couch, two of the front and one of the back, have been clearly represented. Between the legs of the king, is inscribed a letter or monosyllable of which only the superscript: the sign of medial *i*, can be seen (probably *si*). Marginal legend, the first nine syllables of which are off the flan, may be read as, (*Mahārājādhirāja-Śrī-Sa*)*mu(d)raguptaḥ*.

Reverse: Goddess Ekānamśā, two-armed (*dvibhujā*) and nimbate, is sitting on throne, turning bodily to left. She is dressed in loose robe of the Indian style (*śāṭaka*) and bodice (*kañchukī*) reaching up to the navel, and is wearing *keśabandha* or *kuntalamukuṭa*, ear-rings, necklace, armlets, and bracelets.² She holds two lotuses with long stalks in her right hand, while her left hand is empty. Her right arm is extended, though slightly bent at the elbow and the wrist; but the left one (deep cut across it near the shoulder) is bent only at the elbow, hangs by her side, and rests on the hip. Her feet

1. See above, p. 2, n. 1.

2. See above, p. 4, n. 1.

rest on a full-bloomed lotus. The throne has a high, erect, and oval-shaped back, and a round base covered with ornamental designs. To the right, is the legend (Sa)mudragupta. No symbol. Border of dots.

[Plate II]

The coin described above presents a number of specialities which have not been found so far on any one of the *Lyrist Type* of that particular group to which it belongs. As we know, the gold coins of Samudragupta, belonging to the *Lyrist Type*, are of two different fabrics, viz, (1) 'Large and Thin' and (2) 'Small and Thick', the size of the former ranging from .8 to .92, and that of the latter, from .72 to .77, both inclusive.¹ The present coin comes under the second category, that is to say, is one of the 'Small and Thick' fabric, its size being exactly .75. Before we proceed to institute a critical comparison between this coin and others of the same type, we should note the specialities which distinguish it from them. They may be summed up as follows:—

A. Obverse

- (i) A letter or monosyllabic word which is off the flan, leaving its superscript, the sign of medial *i*, behind (probably *si*), is a part of the *obv.* device;
- (ii) The superscript of that letter occurs between the legs of the 'king';

1. The maximum and the minimum size of the coins of the *Lyrist Type*, which have been recorded so far, are .92 and .72 respectively. The difference between the two is, therefore, .2 inch (*Ind. Mus. Catal.*, i. p. 101, No. 3; *Luck. Mus. Catal.*, p. 10, No. 41; *J.R.A.S.*, 1889, p. 68; *Bayana Hoard Catalogue*, p. 59, No. 189). Coins of the *Lyrist Type* measuring .72 inch are of extreme rarity.

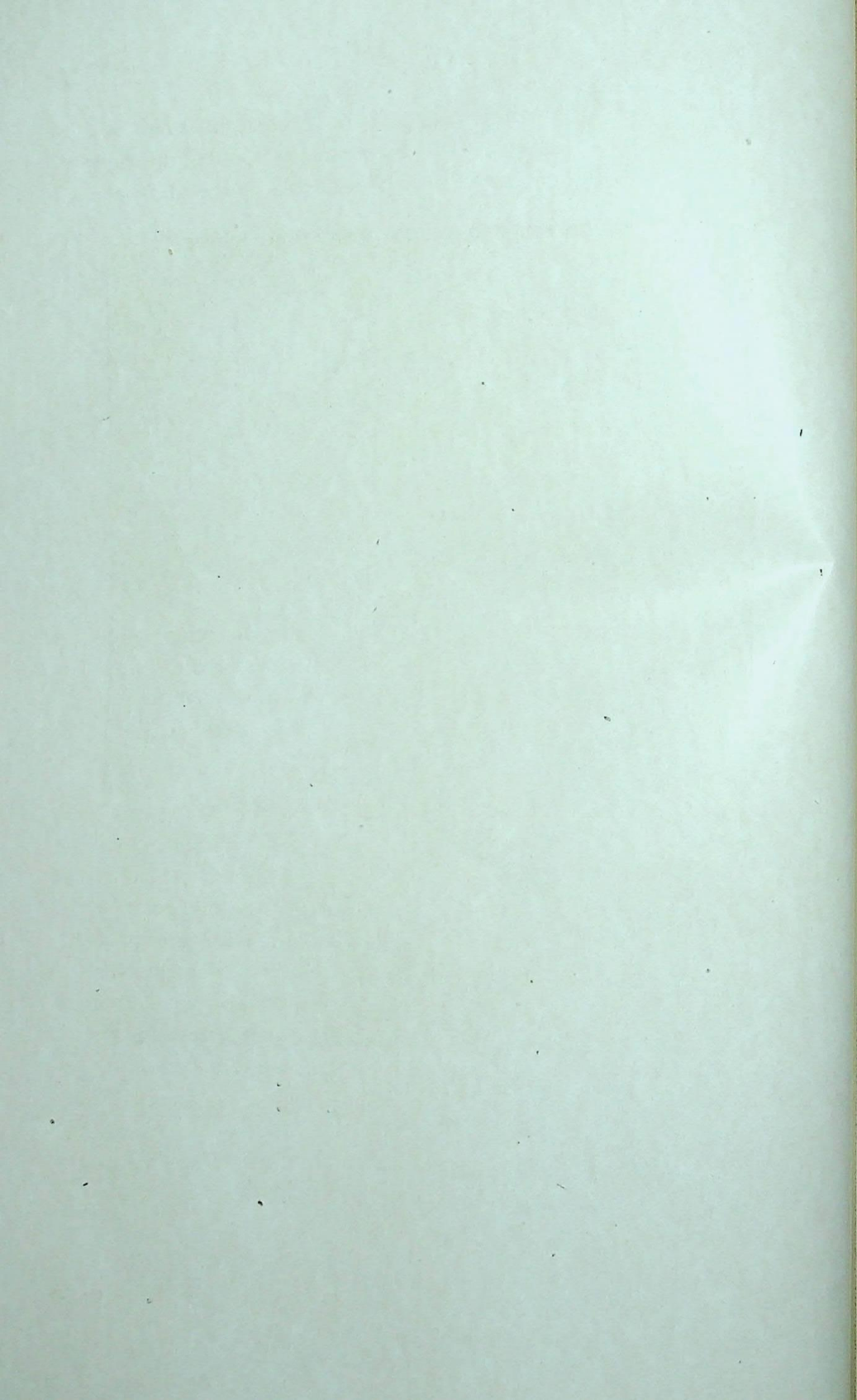
Diskalkar informs us that only one coin of the *Lyrist Type* of Samudragupta has been discovered in the Bamnala hoard, which is similar to the one illustrated by Allan in the *British Museum Catalogue* (Pl. V. 8; also see p. 20, No. 55), and that its diameter is .8 (*J.N.S.I.*, v. pp. 137 and 140). His information about the size of that coin is, however, not beyond cavil for two reasons. First of all, the diameter of that coin, as measured on the Plate (*J.N.S.I.*, v. Pl. IX. A, 8), is definitely less than .8 and, secondly, there is a symbol on its reverse. The coin of the *Lyrist Type* described and illustrated by Allan in the *Brit. Mus. Catal.* (No. 55), belongs to *Var. B* of that coin-type, that is to say, one of the Small Fabric, and its size is less than .8. Not a single coin of Samudragupta, belonging to the Small Fabric group of the *Lyrist Type*, has come to our notice so far, which measures .8 and at the same time bears a symbol, a fact which tempted us to verify the measurement of the diameter of that coin of the Bamnala hoard, as given by Diskalkar. From the Plate, the size of that coin appears to be .75, if measured horizontally, and .73, if measured vertically. Since no one can vouch for the accuracy of such measurements, numismatists would be glad to know the exact size of that coin, because of the problem created by its fabric and symbol, as pointed out by us.



1. Obv.
2. Rev.

3. Obv. (Enlarged)
4. Rev. (Enlarged)

A Unique Gold Coin of Samudragupta of the
Viṇāvādaka Type (Lyrist Type)



- (iii) Close to that superscript, but slightly to the right, there is a small footstool of which only the flat top is visible (the right foot of the 'king' rests on it aslant, supported by the toes); and
- (iv) The back of the couch has a distinct inward curve.

B. Reverse

- (i) The nimbus (*prabhāmaṇḍala*) encircling the head of the goddess, has been represented by a semicircle which appears in the direction she is looking at;
- (ii) The left hand of the goddess is empty and rests on her hip ;
- (iii) There is no *visarga* at the end of the king's name ;
- (iv) The legend does not occur in an *exergue*; and
- (v) There is no symbol.

A critical comparison of the present coin with the other gold pieces of Samudragupta of the *Lyrism Type*, whether of the Large or of the Small Fabric, on the basis of the specialities noted above, brings out certain facts of numismatic interest, as stated below.

A. Obverse

Regarding *Obv.* No. (i), it may be noted here that the mutilated letter in question, which seems to be the first syllable of the name of either the die-cutter or the mint-master, more probably the latter, was hitherto known to be a speciality of the gold coins of Samudragupta, belonging to the 'Large and Thin' *fabric* group of the *Lyrism Type*; but the present coin, for the first time, clearly suggests the possibility of its occurrence on one of the 'Small and Thick' *fabric* of the same coin-type. A portion of that letter, viz, its superscript which is the sign of medial *i*, occurs quite unexpectedly on the *obv.* side of our coin, thereby compelling us to distinguish it from others of the same *fabric* and place it in another group. As the sign of medial *i* of the Gupta period, is still very distinct near the edge at VII. o'clock point, the die used for stamping its *obv.* side, should be expected to have that letter engraved on it fully, as a part of the *obv.* device. The disappearance of that letter, leaving behind its superscript, and of the king's footstool, except of its flat top, as well as of a portion of the marginal legend, is entirely

due to the defective method of stamping coins in those days. Since on the *obv.* side of the coins of the Large Fabric, that letter has been read as *si*, the sign of medial *i* occurring on the same side of our coin, although it is one of the Small Fabric, may be taken to suggest the very same reading for that mutilated letter.¹

As regards *Obv.* No. (ii), it must be mentioned at the very outset, that if any comparison has to be instituted in respect of this particular point, it should be done only with what we find on the *obverse* of the coins of the Large Fabric of the *Lyrism Type*, since no coin belonging to the Small Fabric group of that *type*, has come to light so far or, at any rate, is known to us, on the *obv.* side of which that letter or monosyllable has been found to occur. For the information of our readers, it may be noted here that it also does not occur on the *obverse* of the four coins of the Small Fabric of the *Lyrism Type*, discovered in the Bayana hoard. With regard to that letter, i.e., *si*, the difference that we notice between our coin and those of the Large Fabric, is that, whereas in the case of the former, it occurs in the field between the legs of the 'king,' but slightly below them, in the case of the latter, it has been found invariably to be inscribed on the footstool, on which the right foot of the 'king' has been shown as resting. Thus, through the present coin, we not only find for the first time, the occurrence of that letter on the *obv.* side of one of the Small Fabric, but also away from the object representing the footstool of the 'king'. It is true, however, that in the case of our coin, the lower part of that letter as also of the footstool are off the flan, because of the crude method of minting coins in those days.

1. In the opinion of Allan, the monosyllable *si* occurs on the *obv.* side of the coins of Samudragupta, belonging to the *Lyrism* and the *Āvamedha Type*, as an abbreviated form of the word *siddham* (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Gupta Coins, Intro. pp. lxxv and lxxvii; cf. *Bayana Hoard Catal.*, Altekar, Intro. p. lx). We regret to say that we have not been able to find any cogent reason for accepting his theory. The use of a letter or monosyllable, not as a monogram but as a new numismatic device, is to be noticed for the first time on certain coins of Apollodotus II Philopator; but its occurrence was more frequent on the bronze than on the silver coins of the Indo-Greek kings, the script used for the purpose being Kharoshthi. Monosyllables also occur on the coins of the Indo-Scythian, the Indo-Parthian, and the Kushāṇa rulers; and by the time the Guptas came into power, their occurrence had already become an established numismatic practice. The monosyllables in Kharoshthi, occurring on the coins of the rulers belonging to the aforesaid foreign dynasties, which are too numerous to be specified here, cannot possibly be the abbreviated forms of some benedictory words. If we accept the theory of Allan, we shall have to find out the benedictory words suggested by *go*, *gre*, *cha*, *ja*, *jā*, *dha*, *bha*, *bhā*, and *ru*, which like *si*, are to be met with on certain Gupta coins. But with the exception of *siddham* and *jayam* or *jayatu* which may be taken to be the contractions for *si* and

With regard to *Obv.* No. (iii), we should note particularly the length of the flat top of the footstool which is to be seen on the *obv.* side of the present coin, as compared with that depicted on other coins belonging to the Large Fabric group of the *Lyríst Type*. If we do, it will be seen that the top of the footstool, as shown on the former, is comparatively smaller in size than that as depicted on the latter. A number of specimens, but only of the Large Fabric, would be available to institute this comparison. In this connexion, it may be noted here that not a single coin of the Small Fabric of the *Lyríst Type* has come to light so far, on the *obv.* side of which, the footstool in question has been represented. The appearance only of the top of the footstool on the *obv.* side of our coin, is clearly an indication of the fact that owing to the defective method of minting, that object itself could not appear in full, like the monosyllable *si* (?) and the portion of the circular legend coming between I and IX o'clock points.

As for *Obv.* No. (iv), it may be noted here that on the other coins of the *Lyríst Type*, the high back of the couch on which the 'king' is seated, has been depicted either as erect and having a border of knobs, or as slanting, but without any ornamental border. The back of the couch figures, too, on the present coin, but its shape is entirely different. It is neither erect nor slanting, but has a distinct inward curve. Moreover, it has near its upper end, a beautiful design which may be described as 'wave crests.' The curved high-back of the couch on one side, and the long curved neck of the *vñā* on the other, with the figure of the 'king' coming in between the two, have made the *obv.* device of our coin attractive and all the more so, because of their symmetry and delicate curvature.

ja respectively, we are indeed at a loss to account for the benedictory words of which the other monosyllables mentioned above may be considered to be the abbreviated forms. Again, had they been the contractions for some benedictory words, they would not have been found to occur invariably near the feet of the 'king,' but elsewhere in the field. It is because of these reasons that the theory of Allan does not appeal to us.

In our opinion, the monosyllables occurring on the *obv.* side of certain gold coins of the Imperial Guptas, both Earlier and Later, are the initial letters of the respective names of different mint-masters, and not of die-cutters, since the latter had to work under the guidance and supervision of the former. Allan has completely overlooked the fact that it is not the benedictory, but the '*bhattārakapādānām dāsa*,' '*bhattārakapādānudhyāta*,' or '*bhattārakapādāsamīpāparisarpṇamati*' character that has been suggested by those monosyllables through their occurrence, without any exception, near the feet of the 'king,' in different Gupta coin-types, whether we attribute them to the mint-masters or to the die-cutters.

B. Reverse

Regarding *Rev. No. (i)*, we should note that, whereas on all the coins of the *Lyríst Type* known to us so far, the nimbus (*prabhā-maṇḍala*) of the goddess has been represented by a circle, on the present coin, it has been shown in the form of a semicircle. It occurs on the left which is evidently the direction, the deity is facing.

As regards *Rev. No. (ii)*, we should note particularly that on the reverse of all the coins of the *Lyríst Type* known to us so far, the deity has been represented as holding an object by its tapering end in her left hand. That object which is undoubtedly an iconic attribute, has been described as *cornucopiae* by all numismatists, as if it has any iconic significance in respect of a Hindu deity. We regret to say that we cannot see eye to eye with those numismatists who have taken it to be the representation of *cornucopiae*, or the Horn of Plenty (horn of the goat Amalthea by which Zeus was suckled), which is a popular motif in early Greek sculptures. Sivaramamurti on the other hand, considers it to be the representation of *kośa*, or treasure, despite the fact that the object in question looks like a *gadā*, or mace, on some coins and a *khadga*, or short sword (with broad blade tapering towards the handle), on others.¹ It might have therefore suggested anything to the Gupta artists, except the two thought of so far by different scholars. Since there is nothing in the left hand of the goddess figuring on our coin, further discussion on the identity of that iconic attribute will be out of place here. Suffice it to say that her left hand is empty and rests on her hip. Again, her left arm has been so depicted as to leave clear the ornamental carvings near the edge of the back of the throne, although it hangs by her side and is slightly bent at the elbow. The suggestion that her left hand rests on the hip, comes from the position of her bracelet which is clearly in line with her waist.

1. *Numismatic Parallels of Kālidāsa*, C. Sivaramamurti, p. 13. But the extract from the *Raghuvamśa* cited by the author, refers to Kshiti, or Earth-goddess, and not to Lakshmi or Rājyalakshmi.

Sivaramamurti is definitely of the opinion that the female deity portrayed on the rev. side of the gold coins of Chandragupta I, is Rājyalakshmi. We are, however, as yet ignorant of the fact that 'noose' (*pāśa*) is one of the recognized attributes of the goddess Lakshmi, whether of *kula* (family) or of *rājya* (kingdom). Cf. *Memoirs, Arch. Surv. of Ind.*, No. 73, p. 22, and Pl. XXIV. 78 (with note).

With regard to *Rev.* No. (iii), it may be pointed out here that whereas on all the coins of the *Lyryst Type* of both the *fabrics*, which have come to our notice so far, the *rev.* legend reads as *Samudraguptah*, it is on the present coin, that we notice for the first time, the absence of *visarga* after the king's name. The *rev.* legend on our coin, is very distinct and reads as *Samudragupta*.¹

In respect of *Rev.* No. (iv), we would like to draw the attention of our readers to the fact that on the coins of the *Lyryst Type*, whether of the Large or of the Small Fabric, the *rev.* legend, as a rule, is written horizontally and occurs in an *exergue* in the right field. But in the case of the present coin, although the legend is written horizontally and in full, despite want of space in the right field, there is no line of *exergue* separating it from the figure of the female deity, as on all the other coins of this *type*. Instead of that line, we find a deep cut on the right, which runs across her left arm near the shoulder. It might have been caused by some mechanical defect of stamping the coin or might be due to an afterthought of putting the legend in an *exergue*, a special feature of the *rev.* device, which the die-cutter had previously overlooked. Whatever be the reason, a deep cut or indentation cannot be considered numismatically to be the line of *exergue*, which must be one embossed and not engraved.

As for *Rev.* No. (v), which is undoubtedly a unique feature of our coin, it would be sufficient to note that on all the coins of the *Lyryst Type* belonging to the Small Fabric group, a symbol occurs invariably in the upper left field, close to the nimbus of the female deity. An exception to this *rev.* style is to be noticed for the first time on the present coin, since no symbol occurs on the *rev.* side, although it belongs to the Small Fabric group. It is only on the coins of the Large Fabric of the *Lyryst Type*, that no symbol has been found to occur so far.

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1. So far as we know, the only other coin belonging to the Small Fabric group of the *Lyryst Type*, which bears on the *reverse*, the legend *Samudragupta* (without *visarga*), is the one discovered in the Bamnala hoard (*J.N.S.I.* v. p. 140). Since Diskalkar considers it to be similar to coin No. 55 of Allan's *Catalogue* (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Gupta Coins, p. 20), we have reasons to suspect the correctness of the reading of the *rev.* legend as given by him. The *rev.* legend on coin No. 55 of the British Museum cabinet, is *Samudraguptah*. If those two coins are of the same *rev.* die, as they appear to be, their common *rev.* legend should be expected to have a *visarga* at the end. But the absence of it, in the case of the one discovered in the Bamnala hoard, is evidently due to the mechanical defect of stamping, since the die appears to be partly off the flan (cf. *J.N.S.I.*, v. Pl. IX. A, 8).

The classification of the coins belonging to the *Lyrist Type* of Samudragupta should now be as follows:—

A. Large Fabric

Obv. Footstool inscribed with the letter *si*.

Rev. No symbol ; legend, *Samudraguptaḥ* (in *exergue*).

B. Small Fabric

Var. A

Obv. No footstool or the letter *si*.

Rev. Symbol ; legend, *Samudraguptaḥ* (in *exergue*).

Var. B

Obv. Footstool (not inscribed); letter *si* (in the field).

Rev. No symbol ; legend, *Samudragupta* ; different female deity.

Since the present coin bears the special features of the *Var. B* of the Small Fabric and since the back of the king's couch as depicted on the *obv.* side, is entirely of a new pattern, we have no hesitation to admit that it is a unique gold coin of the *Lyrist Type* of Samudragupta.

The goddess portrayed on the *rev.* side of the present coin, appears to be Ekānamśā, popularly known as Bhadrā and Subhadrā. She is a Vaishṇava deity, being mythologically the sister of Kṛishṇa and Baladeva. According to the *Skandapurāṇa*, she is an aspect of Śakti, the Supreme Goddess, who appeared in this world, only to give protection to Kṛishṇa and Baladeva by being their sister.¹ Though primarily a Vaishṇava deity, Ekānamśā, thus, acts as a link connecting Vaishṇavism with Śāktism; and being an aspect of the All-powerful Divine Mother, her position is no less eminent than that of her two brothers. This important deity has not only been represented by the *rev. type* of our coin which

1. Cf. *J.R.A.S.B.*, 1936, pp. 41-46.

belongs, as stated above, to *Var. B* of the Small Fabric group of the *Lyrical Type* of Samudragupta, but also by that of the gold coins of Kumāragupta I, belonging to the *Horseman Type*, Class I, *Var. A* series, according to the classification of Allan.¹ On the *rev.* side of all those gold coins, as on that of ours, Ekānamśā has been represented in accordance with the iconic injunctions relating to her pose and attribute. She has, therefore, been depicted on them, as holding lotus-flowers in her right hand, while her left hand rests on her waist (*kaṭisaṁsthita vāmakarā sarojāmitareṇa chodvahati*).² While iconically the female deity appearing on our coin, is the same as the one depicted on the aforesaid gold coins of Kumāragupta I, numismatically, the former is the prototype of the latter. The iconic injunctions referred to above, also enjoin that Ekānamśā should be placed between her brothers, Kṛishṇa and Baladeva (*Ekānamśā kār्या devī Baladeva-Kṛishṇayormadhye*). It must have been considered by the Gupta artists to be an absurd proposition, because of their utter inability to carry it out in the face of certain technical difficulties. They found it impossible to represent three deities sitting together or standing side by side, with their respective iconic attributes, suggestive of their identity, within the narrow compass of a coin, whether of the Small or of the Large Fabric, in addition to a symbol, a legend, and a border of dots, all of which are to appear compulsorily on the same side. It is a fact that by eliminating the other deities, as mere adjuncts, the field on the *reverse*, has been left sufficiently clear by them, for depicting the goddess correctly in respect of her pose and iconic attribute, which undoubtedly has made her identification comparatively easy. Except for the lotus-flowers in her extended right hand, we find nothing in or about her, whereby we can identify her with Lakshmī, and, more particularly, when she neither sits on lotus nor rests her feet on lotus.³ Mookerji identifies the female deity depicted on the gold coins of both the *fabrics* of the *Lyrical Type*, issued by

1. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Gupta Coins, p. 69 and Pl. XIII. 1.

2. *Bṛihat-saṁhitā*, lvii. 37.

3. We have raised here the question of Lakshmī, since the female deity depicted on the gold coins of the *Horseman Type*, Class I, *Var. A*, of Kumāragupta I, who is identical with the one appearing on our coin, has been identified by Allan with that wealth-bestowing goddess of the Hindus. (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 69).

Samudragupta, with Sarasvatī, on the ground that, being the goddess of Music, she is the most appropriate deity to be represented on the *reverse* of those coins, on the *obverse* of which, the king has been shown as playing on a *vīṇā*.¹ We regret to say that we find no cogency in his theory to support it. His argument is not only fallacious but goes positively against the fundamental principles of Hindu Iconography. It will appear all the more so, if we judge it from the numismatic point of view. In Hindu Iconography, whether Brahminical, Buddhistic, or Jain, a male or female deity has to be identified through the iconic injunctions relating to his or her attitude and attribute, and not by any extraneous reason. In numismatics, too, the same principle is followed for the purpose of identifying a deity, besides others. To suggest the identity of a god or goddess represented on a coin, not on the basis of the attribute carried by him or her or such other iconic features, and not also on the ground of the similarity or partial similarity of name, which he or she might bear with that of the issuer of that coin, is an absurdity in numismatics, whether Greek or Roman, Scythian or Parthian, Kushāṇa or Gupta.² There is, indeed, no iconographical work with the help of which, the identity of the deity figuring on our coin, with Sarasvatī, can be established. Mookerji may, however, identify the goddess depicted on the coins

1. Mookerji, Radha Kumud, *The Gupta Empire*, 2nd Ed., pp. 35-37.

2. For the affinity of the name of a deity portrayed on a coin (represented sometimes also by symbol, indicative of his or her identity), with that of the king who issued it, the following may be considered as illustrations thereof :—

Agni : Agnimitra; *Bhadra* : Bhadrashosa; *Bhūmi* : Bhūmimitra; *Phalgunī* : Phalgunīmitra; *Bhānu* : Bhānumitra; *Dhruva* (Śiva, represented by 'triśūla') : Dhruvāmitra; *Apollo* : Apollodotus I Soter and Apollodotus II Philopator; *Artemis* (represented by 'tripod-lebes') : Apollodotus I and Apollodotus II; *Artemis* : Artemidorus; *Kumāra* (Kārttikeya) : Kumāragupta I; etc.

If the figure of a deity appearing on the *rev.* side of a Pañchāla coin, is obliterated, he or she may be identified even with the help of the *obv.* legend bearing the name of the issuer of that coin, subject to the condition that his name bears affinity with that of some male or female deity. Although it is a special feature of the Pañchāla coins, a few exceptions are also known. Cf. Macdonald, *Coin Types*, p. 18; Allan, *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Ancient Indian Coins, pp. 192-204; Gardner, *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Greek and Scythic Kings, pp. 34-39 and 54; Narain, A. K., *The Coin-types of the Indo-Greek Kings*, pp. 26-28 and 32 (N.S.I., Monograph No. I).

of the *Lyrst Type* of Kumāragupta I, with Sarasvatī, on the authority of the *Pūrvakāraṇāgama*, an important iconographical work of South-Indian origin.¹

1. The goddess represented by the *Lyrst Type* of Kumāragupta I, holds a lotus with long stalk in her extended right hand, while her left hand hangs by her side. Her left hand is empty and rests on the edge of a couch or throne with high back, on which she is seated (*Bayana Hoard Catalogue*, pp. 302-303; Pl. XXXI. 4-5). The difference that we notice between that goddess and the one portrayed on our coin, as well as on those gold coins which belong to the *Horseman Type*, Class I, *Var. A* of Kumāragupta I, is in respect of the pose of the left hand which, though empty, in the case of the former, hangs by her side and rests on the edge of her seat, and in the case of the latter, is bent at the elbow and rests on her hip. The difference that we notice in the pose of the left hand is crucial. Now if a female deity holds lotus in her right hand and if her left hand is empty and hangs by her side, according to the *Pūrvakāraṇāgama* (xii), she is either Bhavānī or Sarasvatī (*dakṣiṇe choṭpalaṁ haste vāmahastaṁ pralambitam*). The very same pose of the left hand and the iconic attribute carried in right hand, i. e., the lotus, have been prescribed in the *Suprabhedāgama* (xxxiv) also for Gaurī (*dakṣiṇe choṭpalaṁ grāhyaṁ vāmahastam prasārayet*); and these injunctions are perfectly in keeping with those which have been prescribed for that deity in the *Mānasāra* (liv) which, however, adds that she should be represented as a milkmaid (*gobālākāravadbhacet*; read *gopabālā*). The other goddess for whom those injunctions relating to the pose of the left hand and the symbol held in the right hand, have been prescribed in the *Mānasāra* (liv), is Mahī-śakti, also known as Bhūdevī, Bhūmi, and Kṣiti; but it specifically lays down that her image should be placed only on the right side of that of Viṣṇu (*Viṣṇumūrterapasavyake*). The goddess represented by the *Lyrst Type* of Kumāragupta I, may therefore be identified with Sarasvatī, but the consensus of opinion for such a representation, as we have seen above, is definitely in favour of the consort of Śiva, whether we call her by the name of Bhavānī or of Gaurī. Which particular goddess the Gupta artist had in view in depicting her on the coins of the *Lyrst Type* of Kumāragupta, is, indeed, difficult to say; but amongst the three female deities mentioned above, the Earth-goddess Mahī-śakti seems to be the least probability.

CHANDRAGUPTA II

Dhanurdhara Type (Archer Type)(Small Fabric)¹

Provenance : Misrikh, Sitapur
Dist. (U.P.)

Weight : 62.75 grs. (4.0660 gms.,

Metal : Brass

Condition : Much worn, and the
rev. side is doubly
struck; vertical leg-
end on the *obv.* side
is very clear.

Fabric : Round, thin, and of
small size; diameter
·75.

Obverse : King, nimbate, standing to left, dressed in turban, long riding coat with curved opening of the lower half in front and long tail at the back, and tight-fitting trousers, and wearing ear-rings, necklace, and wristlets, holds vertically in his left hand a bow which rests on the ground, with string inwards, and an uncertain object (probably an arrow) in his outstretched right hand. Under the left arm of the king and between his body and the bow-string, is written vertically: *Chandra*. On the left, there is a Garuḍa standard or pillar.² Marginal legend is practically off the flan.³

Reverse (Restruck) : Goddess Lakshmī, nimbate, seated facing front and cross-legged (*padmāsanā*) on a fully blossomed lotus, dressed in loose robe of the Indian style (*śāṭaka*), and wearing *keśabandha* or *kuntala* type of head-dress (*mukuta*), ear-rings (no trace of necklace), and bracelets, holds in her outstretched right hand lotuses with long stalks.⁴ Her left arm is blurred, because of double stamping. There is a symbol on the left, and on the right, the legend (*Śrī*)-*V(i)kra(maḥ)*. Border of dots.

[Plate III. A]

1. See above, p. 2, n. 1.

2. We are not certain as yet, whether the Garuḍa standard figuring on some Gupta coins, is actually the representation of a pillar, having the figure of Garuḍa as its crowning piece. As we know, the *Garuḍa-dhvaja* appears for the first time on some coins of Samudragupta.

3. The marginal legend on the gold coins of Chandragupta II, belonging to the *Archer Type* series, is '*Deva-Śrī-Maharājādhirāja-Śrī-Chandraguptaḥ*.' Some coins belonging to Class II, Var. B, of the *Archer Type*, are, however, conspicuous by the absence of that legend (*Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 30). Obviously, it is off the flan.

4. See above, p. 4, n. 1.

A

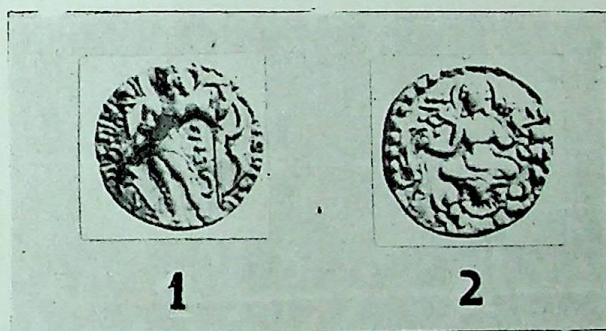


1. Obv.

2. Rev.

A Unique Brass Coin of Chandragupta II of the
Dhanurdhara Type (Archer Type)

B



1. Obv.

2. Rev.

A Gold Coin of Chandragupta II of the
Archer Type, Class II, Var. B.
(*British Museum Catalogue*, No. 71)

The coin described above, which is as yet the only known specimen of the brass coinage of Chandragupta II, has a striking similarity with a particular *variety* of his gold coins. If we leave aside the question of its metal, it would come under the category of the *Archer Type*, Class II, *Var. B*, of the gold coins of that Gupta emperor, according to the classification of Allan, specially because of its *fabric* and *rev.* symbol.¹ The only difference that we notice between the aforesaid gold coins and the brass coin in question, is in respect of the lotus held by the goddess in her right hand, as depicted on the *reverse*. Whereas on the former, the two lotuses in her right hand, have long stalks, on the latter, they have short ones. Allan sees a 'fillet' in the right hand of the goddess Lakshmī as portrayed on the *rev.* side of the gold coins of Chandragupta II, mentioned above.² But the conception of a 'fillet' - if we take the two lotuses with long stalks, held together by the goddess, to be so - is an absurdity from the standpoint of Hindu Iconography; and it will be all the more so, if we judge it from the numismatic point of view. The object which the female deity is represented to be holding in her right hand, may, however, give the impression of a lasso or noose (*pāśa*); but we must remember that the goddess portrayed on our brass coin, as also on those which may justly be considered to have been its prototype, viz, the gold coins of Chandragupta II of the *Archer Type*, Class II, *Var. B*, as stated above, is Lakshmī who has been depicted in the very same manner on the coins belonging to *Var. A* of that *class* and *type* as well.³ That the deity in question is Lakshmī, is beyond cavil. She has not only been represented as *padmāsana* (sitting cross-legged), but also as *kamalāsana* (sitting on lotus), strictly in accordance with the orthodox iconic tradition. Referring to the iconic representation of the goddess Lakshmī, the *Mānasāra*, for instance, prescribes:⁴

रक्ताब्जं पीठतश्चोर्ध्वं देवी पद्मासना भवेत् ।

('The goddess should sit cross-legged on a red lotus above the pedestal'). We do not know what iconic symbol was there in

1. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, pp. 27-28 (Nos. 71, 72 and 74). All these gold coins belong to the Small Fabric group, like our brass coin, and measure .75.

2. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, p. 27.

3. *ibid.*, p. 26.

4. *Mānasāra*, ed. P. K. Acharya, iii. p. 356.

the left hand of the goddess depicted on our coin, since no trace of the hand or of the symbol now remains. Both of them have been completely obliterated, because of double stamping. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the fact that this brass coin definitely comes under the category of the gold coins belonging to Class II, *Var. B*, of the *Archer Type* of Chandragupta II, as evidenced by its *fabric* and *rev.* symbol, we can almost correctly guess all about the left hand of that deity. On the gold coins belonging to that *type*, *class*, and *variety*, the goddess has been represented either (1) as holding a lotus in her extended left hand, slightly bent upwards at the elbow, (2) as holding the same object in her left hand which rests on her hip, (3) as stretching out her empty left hand, or (4) as resting her empty left hand on the hip. It may be noted here that there are four *sub-varieties* of the gold coins belonging to *Var. B* of the *Archer Type*, Class II, if we distinguish them from one another on the basis of the representation of the left hand of the female deity portrayed on the *reverse*.¹ Again, of the four different devices to be met with on the *reverse* of the gold coins coming under *Var. B*, those which bear the same *rev.* symbol as on our coin, are (1) and (4), either of which may, therefore, be taken to suggest the details of the left hand of the goddess. Of course, the line of investigation pursued here, is unscientific and will continue to be so, till our knowledge of the coinages of the Gupta emperors, in respect of *type*, *class*, *variety*, and *sub-variety* is comprehensive. One fact is, however, certain and that is, the die-cutter did not represent the goddess as resting her left hand on the hip, thigh, or knee; for, had he portrayed her in that manner, then some trace of the left hand would have been found on or at least near about any one of them. But it is not so, although the portion of the coin depicting the hip and the thigh, and even the knee of the deity, has not suffered in the least through double stamping. This gives rise to the supposition that the left hand of the goddess, of which no trace is to be found almost from the joint of the shoulder, was depicted as extending towards the right, but slightly bent upwards at the elbow, and also as carrying a lotus with stalk. In other words, the *rev. type* of our coin, appears to be similar to that of the three gold coins of Chandragupta II, belonging to the *Archer Type*, Class II, *Var. B*

1. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, pp. 27-29. See specially coins, Nos. 71, 72, 82 and 83.

(*Sub-variety* (1) of our classification as given above), which are now in the British Museum cabinet (Nos. 71, 72 and 74). They are also of the same *fabric* and bear the same symbol as on the *reverse* of the present brass coin.¹ Though similar in details, the *reverse* of each of those three gold coins and that of the one under discussion, appear to have been struck by means of separate dies, and, consequently, all of them have some peculiarity of their own, in respect of that side [Plate III. B].

The coin described above, is the only specimen of the brass coinage of Chandragupta II of the Imperial Gupta family, that has come to our notice so far. No brass coin of any other ruler belonging to Early or Later Gupta Dynasty, has come to light as yet. In the pre-Gupta period, coins composed of bronze, copper, potin, and lead were undoubtedly current from time to time in Northern India as well as in the Deccan, mostly as auxiliary issues and sometimes also as the standard money of certain territories; but there is no positive evidence to show that brass was used for similar purposes, except from c. 600 to 400 B.C. and again from c. 280 to 310 A.D.² The absence of literary and archaeological evidence relating to the brass currency in the period extending

1. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Pl. VI. 13, 14 and 16. Coin No. 15, illustrated on Pl. VI (Reg. No. 73) is of a different *fabric* and therefore cannot be compared with the brass coin under discussion.

2. In the period extending from c. 280 to 310 A.D., both gold and brass appear to have been used for the purpose of currency by a Later Kushāṇa king. So far, we know only of one Kushāṇa ruler who used both the metals for the said purpose. His name has been differently read on coins, as, Bāsata (Cunningham's earlier reading), Pasata, Pasana (Rodgers) and Basana (Cunningham's later reading which was accepted by Smith). The coins of that king, which were acquired by Rodgers in the Punjab (provenance unknown), are five in number, of which four are composed of the same quality of gold as that of the coins of the Later Kushāṇas. All those gold coins, with the exception of one, are much worn and the maximum weight yielded by them, is 121·4 grs. (*Catalogue of the Coins in the Government Museum, Lahore*, p. 53, Nos. 5-8). Cunningham also discovered a gold coin of that king at Kutunwala Pind, on the western side of the Salt Range in W. Punjab (*Arch. Surv. Rep.*, v. p. 93). Smith saw some gold coins of the same Kushāṇa king in the possession of a coin-dealer in London (*J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 146). Amongst the five coins of Basana (name as read by Cunningham and Smith), which were acquired by Rodgers, there was one which, though ordinarily would appear to be of very debased gold, was composed of brass, as stated by Smith. Since it was made of a different metal, it was struck on the basis of a different *standard*. This is evident from the fact that the difference between its weight which is 65·65 grs., and the maximum weight presented by the gold coins of the aforesaid Kushāṇa king, viz, 121·4 grs., is as much as 55·75 grs., or approximately 56 grs. The whereabouts of that brass coin are at present unknown; but from its description as left by Smith, it appears that in respect of the *obv.* and *rev.* devices, it was similar to the gold coins of that Kushāṇa king.

from c. 400 B.C. to 280 A.D., gives rise to the supposition that it did not find favour with the kings and tribal chiefs, because of the extensive use of brass in domestic life, and in consequence of that, its constant demand in the market. This fact has been fully borne out by the literature of the period, which, while referring to brass and its utility, does not suggest anything about its use for currency purpose. Thus, Kauṭilya in his *Arthaśāstra*, has undoubtedly referred to the manufacture of brass and its commercial utility, but never to its use for minting coins.¹ But the case was altogether different in the age of the Buddha, which may roughly be taken to extend from B.C. 600 to 400. During that period, brass appears to have been used not only for the manufacture of certain types of commodities needed for domestic purposes, but also for coins; and we have no dearth of information in the canonical Pali texts, about the same. In certain early literary strata of Pali Canon, we not only find for the first time, the name by which the brass coinage was popularly known in the days of the Buddha, but also the current rate of exchange between the brass and copper money, and even the prices of certain commodities in terms of the former. We find, for instance, in the *Sutta-vibhaṅga* (*Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*) of the *Vinaya-piṭaka* (Nissaggiya-pācittiya, XI and XII), that four *kaṁsas* were equivalent to sixteen *kaḥāpaṇas*, apparently of copper, and that two and a half *kaṁsas* were equal to ten *kaḥāpaṇas*.² Thus, one *kaṁsa* was equivalent to four *kaḥāpaṇas*, and a half *kaṁsa* which also appears to have been current, but as a subsidiary coin, being half in weight as well as in value of one *kaṁsa*, was equal to two *kaḥāpaṇas*. Both *kaṁsa* and half *kaṁsa* have also been referred to in the *Parivāra* and *Pātimokkha*.³ From another canonical Pali work, the *Dīgha-nikāya*, it appears that simple-minded people used to be cheated by passing brass coins on to them as gold ones, and that the trick was so widely practised by the swindlers, that it

1. *Arthaśāstra*, ed. T. Ganapati Sastri, i. p. 205 (T. S. S.).

2. *Vinaya-piṭaka*, ed. H. Oldenberg, iv. pp. 256-257.

3. *Parivāra*, ed. H. Oldenberg, p. 58. This Pali work was compiled in Ceylon and was incorporated in the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, prior to the fifth cent. A.D. *Pātimokkha*, ed. Vidhusekhar Sastri, p. 271. We do not agree with Pandit Vidhusekhar that the Pali word *kaṁsa* is phonetically the same as the Sanskrit *karsha* (p. 318). The Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit *karsha* is *karisa*.

got the name of *kaṁsakūṭa*, or 'brass-coin-trick.'¹ Some later but authoritative Pali works like the *Kaṁkhāvitaraṇī*, the *Samantapāsādikā*, and the *Vinayatthamañjūsā* have also referred to the brass currency of the time of the Buddha.² The circulation of coins made of brass in the period extending from c. 600 to 400 B.C. is, thus, an established fact in the numismatic history of India.

The *kaḥāpaṇa* to which the *kaṁsa* has been linked by the early Buddhist writers, by specifying the rate of exchange, the former being one-fourth of the latter in value, cannot possibly be of silver. In our opinion, as stated above, it can be only of copper. We are also inclined to believe that four copper *kaḥāpaṇas*, each weighing one *karisa* (*karsha*), or 80 *kṛishṇalas* (*raktikās* or *ratis*), were equivalent to one *kaṁsa* of the same weight, in the age of the Buddha. Although the brass coins current in that age, are expected to be of the punch-marked variety, we have no means of ascertaining the same, since they have totally disappeared, as it appears, like the *hirāññas* (*suvarṇas*), the gold punch-marked coins. The reason as to why the brass punch-marked coins have not been found so far, can be easily guessed. Brass being a very useful metal, coins composed of it, were collected and melted down by the braziers for the manufacture of domestic utensils which were largely used by the

1. *Digha-nikāya*, i. p. 5 (P. T. S.). Cf. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, i. p. 79 (P. T. S.). The meaning of the word *kaṁsakūṭa*, as given by Buddhaghosa in his *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, is fantastic (*Kaṁso vuchchati suvaṇṇapāṭi; tāya vañchanam kaṁsakūṭam*). That learned commentator has apparently overlooked the fact that in the canonical Pali works, while the expressions *kañchanapāṭi* and *suvaṇṇapāṭi* imply 'gold plate' (*Jātaka*, ed. V. Fausbøll, ii. p. 90; v. p. 377), *kaṁsapāṭi* as well as *kaṁsa* signify 'brass plate' (*Vinaya-pitaka*, ii. p. 294; *Majjhima-nikāya*, i. p. 25, P. T. S.; *Sutta-nipāṭa*, p. 14, P. T. S.). In the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, the words *suvaṇṇapāṭi* (gold plate), *rūpiyapāṭi* (silver plate), and *kaṁsapāṭi* (brass plate) occur together. This fact alone shows that *suvaṇṇa* and *kaṁsa* are not synonymous terms in Pali (iv. p. 393, P. T. S.). It is evident, therefore, that Buddhaghosa has used the word *kaṁsa* unwarrantedly in the sense of *suvaṇṇa* (gold). Unauthorizingly, too, he has used the same word, i. e., *kaṁsa*, in the sense of *rajata* (silver) in the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* (cf. *Jāt.*, vi. p. 504). In fact, the metals implied by the term *kaṁsa* in Pali, are brass and bell-metal.

- It may be noted here that in Pali, the word *kaṁsa* not only implies certain alloys of copper, as stated above, but also a measure, as evidenced by the passage, '*Dadāmi taṁ rūpiyaṁ kaṁsapūraṇti*' ('I shall give you a *kaṁsa*-full of silver pieces'), occurring in the sixth *gāthā* of the *Udaya-jātaka*. Unfortunately, here, too, Buddhaghosa has wrongly taken that word in the sense of *suvaṇṇa* ('*Ahaṁ rūpiyapāṭim suvaṇṇapūram dadāmi*'), although the sense of that passage is very clear (*Jāt.*, iv. p. 107). That learned scholiast who had specialized in the grammar of Pāṇini and its commentaries, should not have overlooked the aphorism: '*Kaṁsamanthāsūrpapāyakaṇḍam Dviguḥ*,' which clearly shows that in Sanskrit, too, *kaṁsa* implies a particular measure, besides others (Pāṇ., vi. ii. 122). Moreover, it is evident from the context that in the *Jātaka* passage cited above, the word *rūpiya* means 'silver coins,' and not 'silver plate' as Buddhaghosa has taken it to mean.
2. *Samantapāsādikā*, ed. Takakusu and Nagai, iv. p. 919; *Kaṁkhāvitaraṇī*, ed. M. Ñāṇissara Thera, pp. 199-200 (Sinhalese Ed.); *Vinayatthamañjūsā*, ed. U. P. Ekanāyaka, p. 282 (Sinhalese Ed.).

people of this country in those days, as they are now. One fact is, however, certain and that is, the rate of exchange mentioned in the aforesaid Pali texts, between a *kahāpaṇa* and a *kaṁsa*, viz, 4=1, definitely suggests the relative value of copper and brass during the sixth and the fifth, and also in the first half of the fourth cent. B.C. Since there is no information about the brass currency either in the *Indica* of Megasthenes or in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, we are led to believe that it was discontinued by the Mauryan government due to economic exigency.

We have mentioned above that the full weight of a brass punch-marked coin (*kaṁsa*) in the pre-Mauryan period, was very probably 80 *kṛishṇalas*. The possibility of its standard-weight being identical with that of the gold (*hirañña* or *suvarṇa*) and the copper (*kahāpaṇa* or *kārshāpaṇa*) punch-marked coins, cannot be easily ruled out. That standard-weight, according to Manu, Yājñavalkya, Vishṇu, Kauṭilya and others, was 80 *kṛishṇalas* or *raktikās* (146·4 grs.; 1 *raktikā* or *ratī*=1·83 grs.). But the silver coins of the same period, called *dharaṇa* or *purāṇa* (mentioned also as *kahāpaṇa* in the canonical Pali texts), were struck on the basis of a different *standard* which was even less than half of that prescribed by the aforesaid law givers, for the manufacture of gold and copper coins. Since in the pre-Mauryan and the Mauryan period, the demand of silver in the market, was not adequate to its supply, a different *standard* had to be adopted for the manufacture of silver coins. Taking into consideration the literary evidence which has a distinct bearing on the ancient silver coins, obviously of the commonest punch-marked variety, i. e., thin and flat coins, it appears that they were struck on the basis of a *standard* of 32 *kṛishṇalas* or 1408 *gaurasarshapas*, which is equivalent to 58·56 grs. (1 *kṛishṇala*= 44 *gaurasarshapas*= 1·83 grs.). Unlike silver, brass was not imported from countries outside India.¹

1. Despite the joint testimony of Megasthenes and Kauṭilya, that India has large deposits of silver, the real geological fact is that there is no silver mine as such in this country, but a very small quantity of that metal is available in the mines of lead, mixed up with it (cf. Diodorus, ii. § 36; *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II. Ch. 13). Of the four silver mines mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra*, viz, Tuttha, Kambu, Gauḍa, and Chakravāla, the first two might have been outside India, since there is no literary or epigraphic evidence pointing to their existence in this country. Of the other two mines, the one in Gauḍa, might have been somewhere in the lower valley of the river Mahānandā, in E. Pakistan, or in the Gonda Dist., U.P. (also known as Gauḍa). But if the word Gauḍa has been used in the text, as the *Taddhita* form of Guḍa, then the mine in question has to be located also outside India. As regards the fourth one, we are not at all certain about its location, although a hill in the extreme south of India, was known as Chakravāla in ancient times.

It was manufactured in large quantities in this country, as we know from the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and other works. This might be taken to account for the adoption of the *standard* of 80 *kṛishṇalas* for the manufacture of brass punch-marked coins, as also for bringing all the three classes of coins, viz, gold, brass, and copper, under a common metric system.

There is one more reason for considering the three *standards*, viz, gold, brass, and copper, to have been uniform, during the sixth and the fifth cent. B.C. The *Vinaya* rule in which the *kaṁsa* as a current coin, has come to be mentioned, was framed by the Buddha, during his stay at Śrāvastī, capital of the kingdom of Kośala, and was adopted by the Order of Nuns (*Bhikkhunī-saṁgha*), without any modification but with much clarification. The incident that led to the adoption of that rule of conduct (Nissaggiya-pāchittiya XI of the *Bhikkhunīvibhaṅga*) by the Order of Nuns, took place in the city of Śrāvastī, and the parties involved in it, were a Buddhist nun and the king of Kośala himself. As brass coins were very popular in that territory, during the sixth and the fifth cent. B.C., the term *kaṁsa* has naturally found mention in the aforesaid *Vinaya* rule, in preference to *kahāpaṇa*, or *kārshāpaṇa*. Since the *kahāpaṇa* of copper was an auxiliary coin like the *kaṁsa*, and was current all over Northern India, being the most popular medium of exchange in the age of the Buddha, the mention of a less known coin like the latter, in the aforesaid *Vinaya* rule, in preference to the former, is indeed suspicious. Our suspicion that the *kaṁsa* was the local coin of the kingdom of Kośala, has been confirmed by another *Vinaya* rule which was also framed by the Buddha, but on a different occasion, while he happened to be again at Śrāvastī. It also mentions the *kaṁsa*, like the previous one, for the purpose of determining the degree of an offence which came to be treated as cognizable (Nissaggiya-pāchittiya XII of the *Bhikkhunīvibhaṅga*). This, we think, was

In Ancient India, silver used to be imported in large quantities from outside, because of its extreme dearth in this country. It used to come very probably from Anderab and Badakshan in Afghanistan, Wakhan in U.S.S.R., and Ormuz in Iran, which were famous for their deposits of silver. In Mediaeval India also, besides the places mentioned above, silver came from Japan and Mexico through Malacca. The only lead mine in India, which contains a little more of silver, is the one at Zawar, in the Udaipur Dist., Rajasthan. Though long associated with the haloed memory of Rāṇa Pratāp who had used its lead for making bullets, the presence of silver in it, is a later geological discovery.

necessitated by the fact that the *kaṁsa* was a very popular medium of exchange in Kośala, during that period. We may also infer from the same, that whereas in the other States in Northern India, coins composed of gold, silver, and copper were current side by side in the days of the Buddha, in Kośala alone, there were four different classes of metallic currency, viz, gold, silver, brass, and copper. Since the two *Vinaya* rules referred to above, were intended to be strictly followed all over the country, it was felt necessary by the Buddhist Order (*Saṁgha*) to have the value of the *kaṁsa* clearly specified in terms of the other medium of exchange of lower denomination, i. e., the *kahāpaṇa* of copper, which, as mentioned above, was widely current in Northern India, during that period. We, thus, find the following rates of exchange between those two classes of coins, in the *Vinaya-piṭaka* :—

$$(a) \ 4 \ kaṁsas = 16 \ kahāpaṇas \quad (\text{Niss. XI}), \text{ and}$$

$$(b) \ 2\frac{1}{2} \quad ,, = 10 \quad ,, \quad (\quad ,, \text{ XII}).$$

From the two equations cited above, it clearly appears that one *kaṁsa* was equivalent to four *kahāpaṇas*, obviously of copper. The ratio of their monetary value or purchasing power was, therefore, 1 : 4. But that ratio would remain constant, only if those two classes of auxiliary coins, although they were made of different metals and one of them definitely belonged to the category of regional currency, were struck on the basis of a common weight-standard in a particular State. Since the full weight of four *kahāpaṇas* of copper was 320 *ratīs* (80 *ratīs* × 4), it follows that one *kaṁsa* should be expected to weigh 80 *ratīs* and neither more nor less. We are, thus, led to believe by the two equations cited above, that during the sixth and the fifth cent. B.C., in the kingdom of Kośala, the brass coins, or *kaṁsas*, were struck on the basis of the standard of 80 *ratīs* and that one *kaṁsa* was considered to be equivalent to four copper *kahāpaṇas*. We need not suspect any abnormality in that rate of exchange, if really the relative value of copper (*tāmra*) and brass (*kāṁsya* or *kaṁsa*) of the same weight in that kingdom, was 4 : 1, during the period in question.

Numismatic evidence tends to show that prior to the time of Chandragupta II, brass coins were also current in the kingdom of the Later Kushāṇas, during the decadent period of their history. In the period extending from c. 280 to 310 A.D., as appears to us, a Later Kushāṇa king by the name of Basana (name also read as Bāsata, Bāsana, Pasata, and Pasana) issued brass coins, a specimen of which was acquired by Rodgers in the Punjab.¹ Both Rodgers and Smith made a detailed study of that unique coin along with a number of gold coins of that Kushāṇa king. We have incorporated the results of their study elsewhere.² Suffice it to say, that both the *obv.* and *rev.* devices of that brass coin, are the same as those of the gold coins of that king and that they bear in common, the semblance of some gold coins of the Later Kushāṇa king Kanishka III, as regards *fabric*, *style*, and *types*.³ But the brass coin of King Basana differs considerably from his gold issues in respect of the *standard*. We have come to that conclusion by taking their present weights into consideration. Thus, while the highest weight yielded so far by the gold coins of that king, in their worn-out condition, is 121·4 grs., the weight of his brass coin, the condition of which is equally poor, is 65·65 grs.⁴ The difference of their present weights is, therefore, 55·75 grs. If the difference between those two classes of coins, in respect of weight, amounts to about 56 grs., then we cannot possibly think of a common *standard* for them. We also cannot admit that the *standard* of one of them was half of that of the other. It would be nothing but absurdity, if we think contrarily of either of them. The maximum weight presented by the gold coins of King Basana, which have been discovered so far, is 121·4 grs. Since all those coins, as admitted by Rodgers and Smith, show signs of much wear and tear and evidently, therefore, have suffered considerable loss in weight, the *standard* on the basis of which they were struck, may have been 124 grs., which was also adopted by such Later Kushāṇa

1. *J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 146.

2. See above, p. 61, n. 2.

3. Cunningham, *Later Indo-Scythians*, Pl. I. Nos. 2, 3 and 4; *Num. Chron.*, 3rd Series, xiii, Pl. VIII. Nos. 2, 3 and 4.

4. Rodgers, C. J., *Catalogue of the Coins in the Government Museum, Lahore*, p. 53 (Calcutta 1891); *J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 146.

kings as Kanishka III and Vāsudeva II, for their gold currency.¹ While it has been possible for us to suggest a weight-standard for the gold issues of King Basana, which we even consider to be correct, that possibility seems to be remote, in the case of his brass coin, because of its uniqueness and highly worn-out condition. In view of these and other unsurmountable difficulties as, for instance, the absence of its prototype, it is not an easy affair to solve the riddle of its *standard* or original mint weight. There being no positive evidence supplied by that coin itself, we will have to depend naturally on our own experience of such cases and suggest a weight which may be only approximately correct, as its *standard*. We will not be very far from truth, if we fix it at 73 or 74 grs. and admit that the coin has suffered loss in weight to the extent of about 8 grs. during the period of its currency. Our suggestions are purely hypothetical, but not untenable.

It is a patent fact that amongst the Gupta monarchs, Chandragupta II was the first to introduce bi-metallism. Thus, while the standard money or legal tender of the vast kingdom inherited by him, was composed of gold, as was in the regime of his two immediate predecessors, that of the Śaka territory in Western India, which was conquered and annexed by him, was made of silver. Although we know for certain that his gold coins were also current in the northern as well as in the eastern part of the former Śaka kingdom, obviously, as another legal tender, we have no information whatsoever about the rate of exchange that linked them to his silver issues.² We only know that he had to raise the gold *standard* in the later period of his reign, from 122 grs. to 125 grs.

1. A gold coin of Kanishka III in the Punjab Museum cabinet, weighs as much as 122 grs. (*Punj. Mus. Catal.*, i. p. 212). The *standard* on the basis of which it was struck, may therefore be expected to have been 124 grs., making due allowance for loss in weight during the period of its currency.

2. This fact is evident from the Sanchi Stone Inscription of the year 93 G.E. (A.D. 413), belonging to the reign of Chandragupta II. From it, we not only learn that Eastern Malwa had come into the possession of that Gupta monarch, but by the year 93 of the Gupta Era (A.D. 413), the standard money of the Gupta Empire, which was composed of gold (*dināra*), had come to be recognized as the second legal tender of the former Śaka kingdom, the first one comprising the silver issues of the same Gupta emperor, as well as those of his Śaka predecessors, all of which were identical for currency purpose. It may be noted here, that the vast territory of the Śakas in Western India and Malwa, was wrested from Rudrasimha III, the last known Śaka Kshatrapa, by Chandragupta II, some time between A.D. 388 and 403.

and again to 128 grs. to fix a suitable rate of exchange between the two legal tenders of his empire.¹ Numismatic evidence tends to show that to facilitate ordinary commercial transactions, he introduced copper currency, as auxiliary to his gold standard money, for the northern part of his empire; but in this case also, we do not know the rate of exchange that linked the two. Since his copper issues have been found exclusively in the Gangetic valley, the conclusions drawn by us as regards its monetary character and area of currency, seem to be irresistible. The recent discovery of a brass coin of the same emperor at Misrikh, near the ancient site of Naimishāraṇya (md. Nimsar, Sitapur Dist., U.P.) goes further to show that during his reign, the auxiliary coins in the northern part of his empire, were not one, but of two different varieties. Since his copper and brass coins have not been found so far in the western part of his empire, i.e., in the former Śaka kingdom, we are not in a position to say precisely anything about the character of the subsidiary or the auxiliary coinage that was linked to his silver standard money, to facilitate small transactions. What appears to us is, that the government of Chandragupta II did not feel the necessity of introducing an additional currency for that purpose in that area, since the potin and the copper coins of the Śaka Kshatrapas remained current as the popular media of exchange, even after the annexation of Western India to the Gupta Empire. We are, however, not sure of the fact, whether the lead coins which may be ascribed to the Mahākshatrapa Svāmī Rudrasena III (A.D. 348-378), on the basis of the dates they bear, continued to be current in that area, during the reign of Chandragupta II.

It is interesting to note that there is a striking similarity between the two unique brass coins, of which one was issued by the Later Kushāṇa king Basana and the other, by Chandragupta II. They bear so many special features in common that one of them is bound to be considered to have been the prototype of the other. The present weight of the brass coin of King Basana is 65.65 grs.,

1. Yet another weight-standard of 133 grs. has been suggested by some gold coins of the *Archer Type* of Chandragupta II. They are slightly different from others of the same *type* in respect of *fabric*, and belong to the Kalighat (Calcutta) hoard. For Allan's opinion regarding the origin of their *standard* (132 grs.), see *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Intro. p. cxxxii.

while that of the one issued by Chandragupta II, is 62.75 grs.¹ The difference between the two in weight, is therefore 2.9 grs. Since both the coins are of the very same metal which was not used for currency purpose at least from B.C. 320, if not earlier, and bear almost the same weight, and since both of them were in circulation at least during the last quarter of the fourth cent. A.D., the only conclusion which a numismatist would naturally draw, is that they were struck on the basis of the very same *standard*.² Foreign influence on the weight-standards of the gold and silver coins of the Imperial Guptas is clearly traceable. For instance, the gold *standard* of 123 grs. which was adopted by Chandragupta I (*B.M.C.*, No. 28; Wt. 123.8 grs.) was derived from that of the Later Kushāṇa kings like Kaṇishka III, Vāsudeva II, and Basana. The Later Kushāṇa gold *standard* of 124 grs. is verily the same as that adopted by the Imperial Kushāṇas. It was, in fact, introduced by Wema Kadphises, or Kadphises II (c. 63-78 A.D.), and on its basis (124 grs.) were issued his double staters, staters, and quarter staters, weighing as a maximum, 248 grs., 124 grs. and 31 grs. respectively. The standard-weights of the staters and quarter staters of Kaṇishka I, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva I, are identical with those of Wema Kadphises. But the gold *standard* of 124 grs. which was adopted by that Kushāṇa monarch, was, in reality, of foreign origin, since the *aurei* (gold coins) of Augustus (B. C. 29-A.D. 14), the first Roman Emperor, were based on it. Historically speaking, one of the financial reforms, that was effected in the Roman Empire, during his reign, was the introduction of that gold *standard* of 124 grs., and it was followed by Tiberius and other rulers who came after him. Likewise, no originality is to be noticed in the silver *standard* of Chandragupta II, the weight of which is estimated to have been approximately 36 grs. It clearly

1. For the weight of the brass coin of King Basana, see *J.R.A.S.*, 1893, p. 146.

2. We have stated above, giving reasons, that the brass coins referred to in the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, might have been current, till the establishment of the Mauryan supremacy in Northern India (c. 321 B. C.). Brass currency remained in abeyance up to the time of the Later Kushāṇa king Basana who, on numismatic grounds, has been assigned by us to the period extending from c. 280 to 310 A.D. His brass coins may therefore be expected to have remained in circulation in the kingdom of the Later Kushāṇas in India, for six or seven decades, if not more, during which period, a number of them must have migrated to the empire of the Guptas, in course of commercial transactions which normally take place between two neighbouring territories.

appears to have been based on the average weight (about 36 grs.) of the silver issues of the Śaka Kshatrapas of Malwa and Western India, the theoretical standard-weight of which appears to have been 42 grs.¹ It was adopted by Chashṭana, the founder of that Śaka house, for his silver coinage, since it had been introduced by his predecessor, the Kshaharāta Kshatrapa Nahapāna, who also ruled over the same regions, as the *standard* of his silver coins.² Although rarely extraordinary weights, rising as high as 44·2 grs. have been noticed in the silver issues of the aforesaid Śaka rulers, which constituted the standard money of Malwa and Western India during the period they ruled, its standard-weight must not be supposed to have been higher than 42 grs.³ The *standard* adopted by Nahapāna for his silver currency, i.e., 42 grs., was not an innovation, since it was derived from that of the silver hemidrachms (43·2 grs.), struck on the basis of the Persic *standard* (86·45 grs.) by the Indo-Greek kings, which were continually pouring in the important market-towns and sea-ports of Western India, from the Hellenistic kingdoms in the Punjab and North-Western India, ever since Rome established her commercial relationship with India.⁴ This fact has been amply borne out by the *Periplus maris Erythraei*, the author of which has specifically mentioned in that connexion, the small silver pieces (hemidrachms) of Apollodotus and Menander, as illustrations thereof.⁵ There cannot be, thus, any wonder, if Chandragupta II had adopted the standard-weight of the brass coins of a Later Kushāṇa king, particularly when they were current in the north-western frontier of the Gupta Empire as well as in the tribal territories beyond it, before and possibly also during his reign.

We have stated above that the *standard* on the basis of which King Basana issued his brass coins, appears to be 73 or 74 grs., since the specimen acquired by Rodgers, in its worn-out condition, weighs as much as 65·65 grs. The specimen of the brass coinage

1. Cf. Chatterjee, C. D., *Buddhist Studies* ('Some Numismatic Data in Pali Literature'), ed. B. C. Law, p. 406; *Jour. of the U. P. Hist. Soc.*, vi. p. 161.

2. *Buddhist Studies*, p. 401.

3. *Brit. Mus. Catal.*, Rapson, pp. 134 and 158; *Buddhist Studies*, p. 406, n. 3.

4. *Buddhist Studies*, pp. 395-398 and pp. 405-406.

5. Cf. Schoff, W. H., *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, pp. 41-42 and p. 185; *Buddhist Studies*, pp. 398-399.

of Emperor Chandragupta II, which was discovered by the present writer in the collection of a coin-dealer in Lucknow, and which is alleged to have come from Misrikh (Sitapur Dist., U.P.), weighs 62.75 grs. and its condition is in no way better than the other. The difference between the weights of the two coins is, therefore, 2.9 grs. Normally that much of difference in weight between any two old coins, is to be noticed, even if they are composed of the same metal, struck on the basis of the same *standard*, and current almost for the same length of time. The reasons for that difference are by no means inexplicable. One of them is, the amount of loss in weight, which a coin is likely to suffer during the period of its currency, and the other is, the action of the soil, if it remains buried underground for centuries, without any cover to prevent corrosion. Numismatically, therefore, it is possible to connect the *standards* of those two brass coins and consider them to be one and the same. In fact, we do not find any valid objection to admit their identity. What was exactly the origin of that *standard*, we do not know, but it appears to us to be an indigenous one. There is at least no foreign *standard* which corresponds to it or to which it may be related. Since the average weight of a *rati* (*raktikā*) has been accepted by numismatists to be 1.83 grs., the *standard* of the aforesaid brass coins, which has been estimated by us to have been 73 or 74 grs., would correspond to 40 *ratīs* approximately. If our approximation of the standard-weight of those two brass coins be correct, in view of the facts stated above, then we can only say for the present, that it was acceptable to Chandragupta II, because it was half of the gold and the copper *standard* prescribed by such eminent law givers of Ancient India as Manu, Yājñavalkya, Viṣṇu, and Kauṭilya. It may be mentioned here that the gold and the copper *standard* as prescribed by them, are identical and correspond to 80 *ratīs* or 146.4 grs. approximately.

The similarity that is to be noticed between the brass coin of King Basana and that of Chandragupta II, is not merely in respect of their metal and *standard*, but also of *fabric*. They are thin and round, and bear the very same size. They, however, differ in *type*, as one would normally expect.

There is one point more to be discussed before we conclude. We have stated above, that prior to the time of Chandragupta II

(c. 377-414 A.D.), brass coins were current in the kingdom of the Later Kushāṇas, and that King Basana who issued them, appears to have ruled between c. 280 and 310 A.D. Our statement is primarily based on three facts, viz, (i) Chandragupta I, the first Gupta Emperor, ruled at least for twenty-five years before G.E. 1 (commencing on Feb. 26, 320 A.D.) which is the initial year of the reign of his son Samudragupta, as suggested by his Nalanda and Gaya charters, (ii) the Later Kushāṇa king Basana was an earlier contemporary of Chandragupta I, since the latter copied for his gold coins of the *Standard Type*, the most distinctive feature of those of the former, and (iii) the use of the Gupta script of the earlier variety, or 'old old Nāgarī script' as described by Smith, for the *obv.* legends (excluding the marginal one which is in Greek) on the gold coins of that Kushāṇa king, which cannot possibly be earlier than the last quarter of the third cent. A.D.¹ In view of these and other facts, the period in which the gold coins of King Basana were issued, cannot be either earlier than A.D. 275 or later than A.D. 320, within which limits also, he should be considered to have ruled. We have therefore assigned to him a reign-period of about thirty years, commencing from c. 280 A.D., which is by no means improbable. Thus, if the gold and brass coins of King Basana were issued earlier than A.D. 320, the brass coin of Chandragupta II in question, which, except for the *obv.* and *rev.* devices, is a perfect copy of that of the aforesaid Kushāṇa ruler, should be considered to be later than the former. Incidentally it may be mentioned here, that for a number of reasons, we do not consider the Later Kushāṇa king Basana to be the 'Daivaputra-Shāhi-Shāhānushāhi,' i. e., the Kushāṇa monarch, referred to in

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1. The distinctive feature referred to in item No. (ii), is the method of inscribing the name of the king vertically under the left arm of his figure on the *obv.* side, as we find, for instance, on the coins of the *Standard Type* of Samudragupta. On the gold and brass coins of the Later Kushāṇa king Basana, that vertical legend has been written in the earlier form of the Gupta script.

Regarding item No. (iii), we should note particularly that King Basana, issued gold coins of two distinct *varieties*. They are of the same *fabric* and *standard*, but not of the same *style*. On his gold coins belonging to one of those two *varieties*, the marginal legend in Greek does not occur, and instead of that we find another vertical legend in the vacant right field on the *obverse*, which is also written in Gupta script. On this particular *variety* of gold coins of that Kushāṇa king, we therefore find two vertical legends, one on either side of the sceptre which is to be seen in the left hand of the figure of the king.

the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta. That unnamed *Devaputra* may be either Bhadra, the immediate successor of Basana or, more preferably, Gaḍahara who issued gold coins by associating his name with that of Samudra(gupta), but not Grumbates, whose name has also come up for consideration in connexion with the identity of that Kushāṇa king.¹ The fortune of Grumbates was undoubtedly linked to that of the Sassanid Emperor Shapur II (A.D. 309-379), but there is nothing on record even to adumbrate that he had friendly relations with the Gupta Emperor Samudragupta.

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1. Cf. Cunningham, *Later Indo-Scythians*, Pl. II. 11. See above, p. 45, n. 1. This unique gold coin of King Gaḍahara was acquired by Cunningham in the Punjab.

Cf. Mookerji, Radha Kumud, *The Gupta Empire*, 2nd Ed., p. 27. Grumbates who had virtually disgraced the Sassanian and the Roman Imperialism, is not likely to honour that of the Guptas. Moreover, his ancestral territory lay far away from the western frontier of the Gupta Empire, and between the two, there were at least two Kushāṇa principalities, as the numismatic evidence of the period in question tends to show.

[For the convenience of our readers, certain numismatic terms like *standard* (but not standard-weight or weight-standard), *fabric* (unless specified, whether Large or Small), *style*, *type* (but not coin-type), *class* (without number), *variety*, and *sub-variety*, have been printed in italics. If not printed in italics, they are to be taken in ordinary sense.]

P. M.

